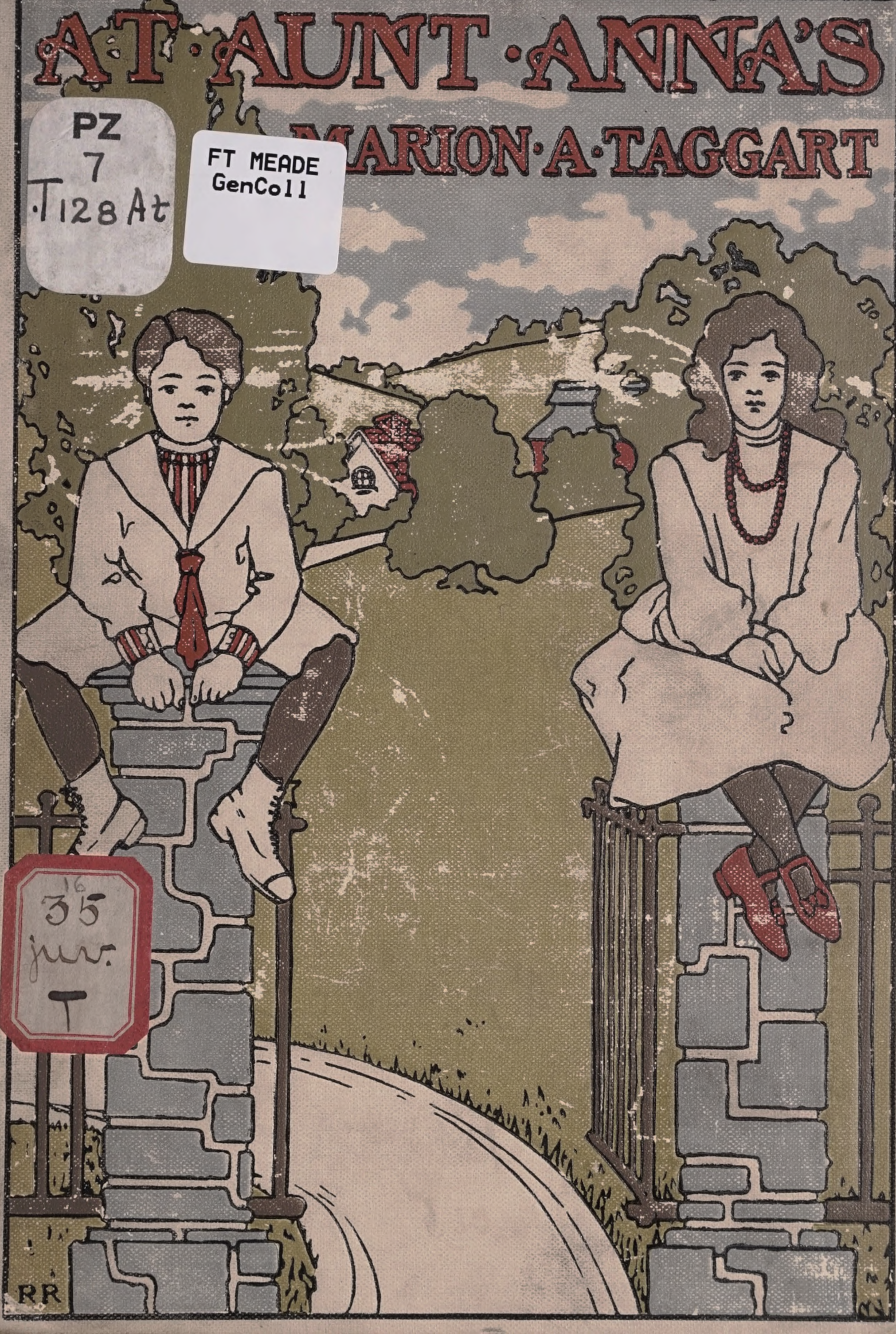
AT AUNT ANNA'S

MARION A. TAGGART



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An important business meeting.

(See page 262.)

AT AUNT ANNA'S

BY

MARION AMES TAGGART

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ILLUSTRATED BY W. L. JACOBS

NEW YORK
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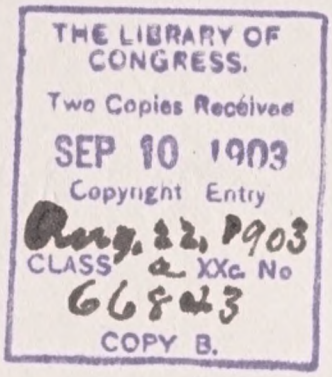

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TO

DEAR LITTLE

LOIS STORM GOODELL.

JUST A WORD

DEAR LITTLE READERS: "Dolly's Dames" really did dress up and play being grown up, like these four little girls in the story—and it was a Dolly who did it. And they formed a Christian Relieving Society all by themselves, like these children. The running away from angry Mrs. Grunt is true too, and was most exciting. The little poem in The Sun and Moon are real verses, written by a real little girl of eight. And dear little white "Billy" and "Pukka Boy" are real cats, very much alive, who helped write the story, and so got into it themselves, with their own names; for if they had not sat purring on the paper, rubbing their faces against the writer, perhaps the story would never have been done—who knows?

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AT AUNT ANNA'S

CHAPTER I

TED AND DOLLY ARE SET FREE

"I'LL bet you couldn't stand on your head on top of this gate-post," said Ted, swinging his black-stockinged legs as nearly on each side of the broad stone gate-post on which he was seated as their length allowed them to come.

"Neither could you," said Dolly promptly, from the corresponding gate-post on which she was more decorously perched.

"You've often seen me stand on my head," said Ted resentfully.

"Yes, on the floor, or on the grass," retorted Dolly, "where there's a place for your legs to fall when you tumble over. There isn't any place on the post but

'way down to the ground, and you wouldn't dare."

"Boys always dare," said Ted. "Girls are 'fraid. You'd just put your both hands on the top of the post, and your head down between 'em, and stick your legs up straight, and there you'd be."

"No, you wouldn't; you'd be *there*." And Dolly pointed to the hard driveway five feet below them. "You can't stand on your head one minute 'thout you wobble, and in less'n another minute you go flat. I guess you'd better not try it on a gate-post."

"Well, could you do it?" persisted Ted, getting away from the discussion of his own skill.

"No, sir, I could not," said Dolly frankly. "And if I could, I wouldn't be such a silly."

"It would be nice if we both could do it," said Ted thoughtfully. "One on each post, like the lions before big houses. You'd be on your head on one post, and I'd be on my head on the other, and folks driving by would stop to look, and be int'rested. We'd get

right side up for breath when there wasn't anybody coming. I should think Aunt Anna would be pleased to have her place have something different in front of it from the other places in Methley."

Mrs. Tarleton would not leave her husband alone to suffer the city heat during a long summer, while she enjoyed the country coolness and beauty. On the other hand, she said that it was out of the question to let her eight-year-old twins, Theodore and Dorothea—Ted and Dolly, as they were always called—stay cooped up between brick walls when summer-time beckoned them away to the freedom of green fields. So in June Ted and Dolly were packed off to Methley, where Mrs. Tarleton's elder sister, the twins' dear Aunt Anna Shirley, lived, and were given into her charge with many warnings as to wet feet, and swimming, and getting lost, and strange dogs, and lonely walks, and above all, never to disobey Aunt Anna. And in the beginning of August Mrs. Tarleton came to Methley, and in the middle of that

month Papa Tarleton came too, for his two weeks' vacation, and in the first week of September the four Tarletons went home to the city till another spring, when the same delightful program was repeated.

Ted and Dolly said they had a mother and a half—mama was mama all the year round, but in summer Aunty Anna was mama too, and they loved her almost as well as their real mother—not as well, of course, because the best of aunts is an aunt, and mama is something quite different.

Methley was a very nice place to visit. It was hilly, but not with such high hills that a person of eight could not run over them without being tired, or in danger. And it had a river, but not a wide, awful stream; rather a tame river, gentle and safe to play with, having lovely little curves and bends, and shady places where you could wade on hot days, feeling cool ripples flow over your bare feet and ankles, and scoop—or try to scoop—up nervous little "minnies," which made themselves into the letter C in their

efforts to get away—and it was just as exciting that these efforts were usually unsuccessful. And you could not possibly get drowned in this friendly river—as Ted assured Dolly—except much below Aunt Anna's—unless you dug a deep hole and lay down in it—and *that* wasn't a very likely thing to happen, as the most timid grown person would have to admit.

There were lovely woods in Methley—woods where you might walk with safety and be always likely to find the dearest shy flowers. Woods which were never dull, because, being safe, you could play in them alone, and fill them with Indians and wild animals such as you never could get in really dangerous woods, where adventures might be honest, true ones, for in this sort of woods grown people had to be with you to watch you, and then you had no fun; neither real dangers, nor the ones you played at having when you were alone and free.

There was a village of Methley—nice to drive to and with very interesting shops, be-

cause they had so many different kinds of things in them, and somehow it looked queerer to see things mixed up that way in the tiny, dusty places than it did in the big department stores at home. There were children in Methley—down in the village part—but Ted and Dolly did not know them. They used to look at them solemnly when they drove through, and the village children stared back even more solemnly, because their eyes were shaded with flapping straw hats or sunbonnets, as the case required, but they did not meet, and the twins felt that they could not ask Aunt Anna why she did not invite them up to the house, because she never said anything about it herself, and it was her house.

But Ted and Dolly were never lonely, for that is where the point of being twins comes in; there are two of you, and there is no chance to be lonely. At home they went to school, and they liked other children, and often had company to spend the afternoon, but they agreed perfectly in thinking that

they had the best times when there wasn't another child about except their two intimate little selves, as cozy as two little peanuts in their shell.

The twins did not look much alike. Ted was brown-eyed and sturdy, boyish but not one bit rough, probably because he had had Dolly to tone him down. He was a brave little lad, and for that reason he was a very kind and tender-hearted one, because only a coward at heart is ever anything but gentle and merciful. Dolly was blue-eyed, with long dark lashes, and soft hair that was full of golden tints, though it was a light brown, and growing darker. She was a sweet little maiden, dainty in all her ways, and with a quiet, quaint little manner of her own that made big people call her old-fashioned.

More devoted twins never looked admiringly at each other out of eyes of any color. Ted knew that other little girls might be nice, and pretty, and even good, but that his sister was all these things more perfectly than they could hope to be.

And Dolly never doubted that other boys were strong, and clever, and true, but she knew there was just one boy who was all right in every way at once—and that was her twin. They shared everything, from their name turned about, but the same, to every book, and toy, and bit of candy—that wasn't being generous, Dolly said; that was because nothing was any good without Ted. And Ted had to fight a boy once—in the kindergarten it was and perfectly awful to think of—because he had laughed at him for wrapping up the caramel the boy gave him and putting it in his pocket to take home, so Dolly and he could eat it together, each taking a suck, turn and turn about, quite fairly.

There was another reason for never being at all lonely at Methley—there were animals, animals, so many it took a person a week each year to get used over again to the joy of having so many, and getting acquainted with the new ones.

Bevis, the horse—named after a horse in

a poem called Marmion, which mama read to the twins because they liked the sound of it—of course he was there every year, and Ted and Dolly knew him like an old friend. Then there were the cows—beautiful Jerseys, Clover and Sweet Briar, and Lady Belle, the soft-eyed Alderney—the twins had known these for two and three years. But there were nearly always new calves to be introduced to, and teach to eat out of their hands, and this year there were three, and Ted and Dolly were to name them. Besides, this year Bevis had another horse come to live with him in his model stable, and help him; a very young horse, with flashing eyes, and a silly way of starting at anything and nothing, because he was too young to have seen much of the world. His name was to be Roderick Dhu—Rod, for short—out of another of Sir Walter Scott's poems, the Sir Walter who wrote Marmion—and this was partly because he was as black as night, and Dhu means black in old Scotch.

Of course there were chickens, and Ted

and Dolly knew most of them by names of their own choosing, and could tell almost to a pin-feather differences in hens which looked exactly alike to grown-up people, who can not seem to see animals very clearly, somehow. Dear Trusty, the big dog, with his plume of a tail, and his swinging gait which kept the plume always waving, Ted and Dolly had known him ever since they were four years old, and Trusty had been but one. He was a friend worth knowing, and he wouldn't touch a cat, not for anything. Lady Mew, the striped gray cat that Aunt Anna thought so very much of, let him lick her kittens, and when a mother cat does that there is no doubt of the dog's character, because she knows whom she can trust, and that there are not many dogs she can let come near her babies, much less touch them.

Then there was "Pukka Boy," a Maltese cat, only two years old, and as beautiful as a cat can be, who got his queer name out of Rudyard Kipling's stories, because "pukka" in the language of India, means several

things that fitted this handsome beastie. And there was white Billy, just grown up out of kittenhood, as gentle and loving a little fellow as ever looked out on a friendly world with golden eyes. He was Dolly's darling, for he had such sweet ways, and never a claw, and cooed so winningly in answer to you when you spoke to him, that he won his way into her heart, just as he purred and rubbed his way into her lap, and then up into her neck when he saw her.

So nobody that had any taste—nobody of eight—could be lonely at Methley, and the best of it all was that these animals had always been so lovingly treated, and never teased, nor frightened, that they were just as ready to make friends as the twins were to have them; Aunt Anna would not have a man on her place who was unkind to the dear, dumb friends who depended upon her.

"Maybe we might as well get down, if we can't be figures on the gate-posts," said Ted at last.

"Why can't we be lions lying down?"

asked Dolly, sorry to have her brother unsatisfied.

"Oh, well; what's the use?" said Ted. "I thought it would be fun to stand on our heads, because it would be so different. But lions lying down—nobody would know what we were."

"Let's play these are towers, and we're watching for the enemy," said Dolly, with a happy thought. "You be a knight, and I'll be a lady's chatelaine—isn't that what mama said you called the lady of the castle in old times?"

"No, not a lady's chatelaine—that's the chain mama hangs her salts and fan and things on," said Ted. "It was Lady Chatelaine—like Lady Washington, you know—that's her name."

"Oh! Well, I'll be that, and we'll watch, because the foe is coming to destroy our castle," said Dolly, scrambling to her feet on the top of the broad gate-post.

"Yes, and I'll tell you: We have to stay here until we're relieved, because there's a

wide sheet of water flowing around this castle—they call it a moat, you know, though I do not see how it could get in anybody's eye, though it says in the Bible about seeing a mote in your brother's eye," said Ted. "Well, anyhow, there's a moat all around us here, and the drawbridge is cut off, so we're prisoners on the towers. And you've got to stay, Dolly, till you're relieved—that must be until aunty or some one comes to fetch us —no matter how tired you are."

"All right," chirped Dolly joyously. "Now we've begun; we're there."

"Do you see dust down the road, my lady?" asked Ted, shading his eyes with his hand, and gazing afar as he leaned forward, one knee bent, and his left hand resting upon it.

"Methinks I do," said the lady. "Dost you think——"

"Gracious, Dolly!" cried Ted, dropping his assumed character for his real one under the strain of this slip on the part of the Lady Chatelaine. "Don't say Dost you!

Don't you know it's always *thou* in those times?"

"Yes. Now don't stop again, please, Teddy. Dost thou think it is the soldiers?"

"Meseems it may be. Yet it looks—looketh—like the butcher. No rescue yet, my lady!"

The Lady Chatelaine heaved a tremendous sigh. "We shall starve if no help comes," she groaned. This seemed hard, with the butcher coming down the road, but Ted did not see the funny side of this remark.

"My feet ache, and my legs are getting stiff; our tower is narrow, my lady. If we must spend the night in this fearful place I doubt that I shall see the morning," he said.

"The wagon has turned into the other road; it was not our soldiers," said the lady. "I see figures far down, though, and they are coming toward us. Dost thou think they are coming to save us?"

"I hear a bell," said the knight on the other tower. "And the figures cross over a

good deal. I think they are the cows belonging to the next castle."

"No fair for a minute," said Dolly. "Say, Ted, do you think this is much fun? Let's get down."

"Now, Dolly, we said we'd stay no matter how tired we were," said Ted reproachfully. "Here comes Trusty, wagging down the driveway. He's looking for us. He'll do for rescue. Now be the chatelaine a minute. My lady, my lady, here comes our faithful friend, Sir Trusty; we're saved. What news, Sir Trusty?"

Ted bent down to ask the question, and the big dog, seeing him, bounded toward him, and stretched up to lick Ted's face, barking the while excitedly. Then he bounced over to Dolly's post and repeated the performance.

"He says that he has brought up his soldiers in the rear, and that we are safe. He says that the drawbridge is mended, and we may come down, my lady," interpreted the knight.

"Sir Trusty, we thank thee awfully," said Dolly, sitting down on the post, and sliding to the ground without the loss of a moment.

Ted swung his arms three times, preparing to jump on the lawn, but thinking better of it, followed his sister's example, and came down in the less glorious but safer way.

Trusty barked and capered, and ran to fetch a stick, making believe that it was the first time that he had ever seen one, and that he had just discovered what a nice toy it would be, if only some boy or girl would throw it for him to run after.

The three ran up the lawn to the house. Aunt Anna met them on the piazza.

"I sent Trusty to call you, Twinsies," she said, kissing each flushed little face. "I thought you would be late to get polished up for tea—it is half past five. But you are just in time."

CHAPTER I

SETH

TED and Dolly were having apple pie and a small piece each of mild cheese down in the orchard under the apple-trees. Apple pie at the table was not very attractive to the twins, but apple pie out-of-doors was glorious. There not only did it catch a new, fine flavor from the sunshine and June winds—and maybe — who could tell? — from the honey-laden bees flying past it, but it became an excitir g adventure to eat it, for it was so hard to hold it, and bite it, and not let one bit ooze out between the crusts and drop on a clean shirt-waist that it kept a person on the jump to manage it just as much as playing puss-puss-in-the-corner did.

"You see that apple-tree down there?"

said Dolly. "No, not that one, but the next one to the next one to that—the one with the two sides to it and a kind of split place in the middle where it grows in two halves," she added, as Ted nodded speechlessly, catching a bit of apple just as it was falling by a skilful twist of his pie, and a sudden dart of the tongue, like a humming-bird when he sees a shiny fly going by. "Well, that apple-tree is bowing to us, and that split place is where it is smiling. It says it's glad we like this pie, 'cause it grew the apples 'spressly for us, and this year it's going to have them bigger and redder, 'cause last year it was just practising making apples."

Ted received this information unmoved; he was used to Dolly's "making believe," and liked to do it as well as she did, but that moment he did not feel in the mood of helping it out—perhaps because cheese and apple pie are solid facts, not helpful to imagination.

Dolly, seeing this, gave up this sort of

play at once, and fell into Ted's mood. She got through with her pie first—she was always quicker at everything than her other half—and removed the juice of the pie and the crumbs of soft cheese from her fingers just as Lady Mew's kittens would have got them off their paws—with her little red tongue, but so daintily that it looked quite as nice a way as using a fine damask napkin —besides, she had no napkin.

"There's a man poking along at the end of the orchard," she said. "He is as slow as anything, but he's coming this way. Do you think we ought to stay? He couldn't be dang'rous, could he?"

"I've been seeing him for a long time," said Ted, "but I couldn't tell you 'cause of the pie." He, too, had put away the last bit, and was now free to talk. "We can't see him plain enough to tell how dang'rous he might be, but he's too poky to do any harm. I guess he's going up to the house. If he was a burglar he wouldn't act like that."

"Burglars creep along," objected Dolly.

"Oh, well, yes, I know they do. But there are creeps and creeps. They don't do like that—they crawl and crawl. 'Sides, they don't burgle in the daytime, nor in orchards. Burglars burgle around back windows, and in the night, when they have to have dark lanterns. I think he's a caller." Ted spoke as positively as if he had been on the police force for years, and knew burglars' ways of old, but though Dolly was struck by his wisdom in such matters, her sense of social propriety led her to protest. "Aunt Anna wouldn't have a caller coming up so funny through the orchard, Teddy," she said in a shocked voice. "Aunt Anna is a lady, and her callers act like ladies."

"This is a man, Twin-Doll," Ted said. "Aunt Anna's men callers don't act like ladies."

"Well, he's coming nearer and nearer—I hope he's safe," whispered Dolly. "Look, Teddy; he's sort of grubbing along, 's if he'd lost something! No; he's picking things; he's got a handful of leaves already."

The man had come near enough now to be in plain sight, and the twins felt no more anxiety. He was a slender man, not above medium height if he had stood straight, but his thin shoulders were bent as if from years of stooping, and this made him look small. His eyes were blue, and had a far-off look and a dreamy expression, as if what they saw was at one and the same time in another world, and within himself. His lips wore a sweet, uncertain smile, like that on the lips of a little baby, half waking, half sleeping. The children did not think of his age; if they had they would probably have said he was old, for he must have been about forty, but he was the sort of person who has no age, and when they knew him the twins understood that this was because the woodland fairies had touched him in the cradle, and made him their own. In his hands he held freshly gathered herbs, and he stroked them with his thin fingers in a way that reminded Dolly at once of her mother's way of smoothing her hair before she tied the ribbon on it,

and her eyes filled with tears, though she did not know why, for she was not at all unhappy.

It was impossible to feel the least fear of such a man, and Ted and Dolly waited his coming as still as two rabbits, but with none of the rabbits' desire to scuttle off.

It was the man who was startled when he saw the children, but after a slight backward movement, he smiled at them, because he saw that they were children, and he never minded coming upon little folk, though he liked to keep away from grown-up people.

Ted and Dolly smiled back at him, and he held out to them two beautiful flag blossoms —and the twins had looked in vain for the flower-de-luce along the river. Feeling that there was something out of the ordinary in a man who looked and smiled like this, so silently, and who could find the bright purplish blue blossoms where their keen eyes had failed, Ted and Dolly arose, and just as silently accepted the gift, looking up into the dreamy blue eyes which came

The three went through the orchard to the house.

back from the far away to answer the children's gaze with one of true comradeship and understanding.

Suddenly Dolly slipped her hand into the one she and Ted had just emptied of the flowers, and she felt it tighten, cool and firm, over her warm little palm. Then Ted put his hand into the man's other arm—because that hand was full of herbs, and without a word of question or explanation, the three went up through the orchard to the house.

Aunt Anna did not seem surprised to see the stranger, though Ted and Dolly half expected her to be startled, and would not have been greatly astonished if she had not been able to see him, for they both had an undefined feeling that he had dropped from fairyland, and if he had had fern seed in his pocket—which gives any one the power to go about unseen—as well as meadow herbs in his hand, it would have seemed only what was to be expected of their companion.

But Aunt Anna could see him; she came

out, smiling and nodding, and waited under the grape arbor at the back of the house for them to come up. And Trusty saw him—but that was less strange—and came whining and shaking down to them, and put his paws on the stranger's shoulders and licked his ear, with an added warmth of touch over and above his usual kindliness. And a little farther along—Trusty now escorting the man, and making it very hard for Ted to walk, because he was determined to wag along close to his side—a little farther along Pukka Boy and Billy saw him, and trotted down to meet him, and Pukka Boy spread his fore-legs apart, and put his head down between them till he stood on the very top of it, which was his way of welcoming his friends, and Billy stretched up, and pulled and pulled the leg of his trousers, which was Billy's way of showing joy at meeting. Nor was this all, for just before they reached Aunt Anna, Lady Mew came along, head well back, and a plump kitten looped up by the back of its neck between her teeth, and

this she laid directly at the strange man's feet, and rubbed herself joyfully against his boots, while he took it up and cuddled it in his neck.

"All your friends, Seth, remember you," said Aunt Anna, coming forward and offering her hand. "Little folk in fur and feathers, and little folk in ginghams," she added, with a glance at the entranced twins, "all follow you and love you. And I think the plants must know you, because they show themselves to you, where no one else can find them."

Seth gave her a shy smile, and dropped his eyes. "People are made for people, and then again people are made for plants and dumb things; I was always most kin to these," he said, and his voice was low and had a curious sweetness in it that made musical Dolly thrill to it without knowing why she did so.

"Did you bring me anything to-day?" asked Aunt Anna.

"Not to-day, no'm," said Seth. "I came

to ask if I should make you up the same essences and extracts as last year. I'm planning my season."

"Yes, please, Seth, and a little more sage and marjoram—yes, and pennyroyal," said Aunt Anna. "And if you can spare more lavender, I'd like to have it. And thyme, and a larger bottle of anise essence, because that's so useful in many ways."

The children listened to these fascinating words, entranced, and more than ever certain of the stranger's mystery. Marjoram, sage, lavender, thyme, anise—what these were they did not know, but they were beautiful words, the kind of words you would expect this man to deal in, and be names for things which he handled.

"I'll bring them, m'am," said Seth. "Thank you." He turned as if to go, but Aunt Anna said: "Don't go at once, Seth. Come and sit on the piazza, and Nellie will bring you a glass of cold birch beer."

"I think I must go, m'am," said Seth.

"I'm going through the westerly woods. I can't stop, thank you kindly."

"Oh, don't go," cried Ted impulsively. "We've got the loveliest calves you ever saw in all your whole life. And we'll show you Roderick Dhu—he's black as anything, and just prances. He's a dandy—please let me show them to you."

"Don't go," added Dolly softly. "Lady Mew's got three kittens—she only brought you one. And they're lovely. And we want you to stay."

Seth smiled down on the eager faces, his own lighting up with pleasure and with a gleam of fun.

"I can't stop, dears," he said. "But I'll tell you what I will do. If your aunty don't mind, I'll take you with me through the westerly woods. I'm sure she won't mind, because she knows I'll take the best care of you, and nothing ever happens to my children—I have more child friends than most people. Will you go?"

Ted and Dolly jumped up and down,

wringing their hands—or Dolly did—in agonized appeal to Aunt Anna, as if she were about to sentence them to death.

But Aunt Anna had no idea of sentencing them even to disappointment. She laughed outright at the two little figures bouncing up and down before her, and said: "I'm only too glad for them to have such a pleasure, Seth, if you are quite sure you want them."

Dolly looked with searching anxiety into the blue eyes, but what she saw there made her clap her hands, while Ted, reading the kind face with equal eagerness, turned a somersault on the grass to express his satisfaction in the welcome he saw there, a welcome most unlike the patient affection with which grown people usually assent to a plan to give little people pleasure.

Without a word beyond good-day to Aunt Anna, Seth turned away, Ted and Dolly clinging to each hand and Trusty swinging on ahead, as a matter of course, which was very nice, certainly, and yet did seem rather

hard on Lady Mew, Pukka Boy, and Billy, who sat on the garden walk with their tails wrapped around them, and their yellow eyes fastened on the retreating group, and no mortal could say what they were thinking, nor how they felt at being left behind.

How beautifully cool it was in the woods, coming into its aisles out of the sunny and dusty highway! Ted and Dolly discovered that Seth was more than likely to run into things, and in a short time they had begun to feel a care of him, and to steer him around objects that might be in his path. For instance, before they had discovered this weakness, he walked directly into a wheelbarrow, and only saved himself from falling by a quick fling of his leg over the barrow's nearest handle, and as Ted said afterward, goodness knows, a wheelbarrow is easy enough to see!

But when they came into the woods Seth was quite different; here it was he who had eyes, and the children began to feel like ten-

day-old kittens, with their eyes coming open for the first time.

"It was inside his head, Teddy, that he didn't see; it wasn't his eyes," Dolly said, when they got home, and that was precisely what it was.

Here in the woods not a tiny brown bird lighted on a branch, not a pair of bright, restless little eyes peered from a hole in a tree trunk, not a leaf seemed to raise itself out of the moist, mossy sod unseen of Seth. And, seeing them, he knew them by name, and told the children the stories of their tiny lives, told them with a grace of fancy, yet with a fidelity to truth that made every step of the way a joy.

After a while they rested under a big oak which had been dropping its bronze leaves in the successive autumns just to make a carpet for its three guests, and here Seth showed the twins new wonders. Hiding Ted and Dolly away under the near-by shrubbery, he threw himself prone on his back and began a series of low, soft, wooing

whistles and calls, gentle, coaxing, loving, and the children waited to see what would come of them, hardly daring to breathe.

By and by a bird came, and hovered near him; then a "chippie" fluttered up to him, and sat, turning its head from side to side, saying as plainly as it could: "What a very nice creature this is, even though he is big!"

A robin lighted on a branch of the oak-tree, and uttered its sharp, decided note several times quickly, and peered down at Seth, with his saucy head cocked sidewise, as much as if to say: "Well, you called me, and I had to come, but what am I to make of it all?"

A squirrel could not restrain his curiosity, and ran down the oak's trunk, almost to Seth's head, then darted up again, chattering with excitement, but not much afraid, for he perched on the lowest branch, and sat up straight to see the better. And by and by Seth dropped some crumbs for him, gently, hardly stretching out his hand, and before the squirrel knew what had come

over him, he was trusting the man, who was as quiet as he was restless, and eating up the lunch he had spread for him, within easy reach of a hand which, in some way, the little citizen of the woods knew would never be raised to harm him.

"Come, now," called Seth at last, and Ted and Dolly crept forth, feeling as if they had had a glimpse of that lovely young world, just after creation, of which mama told them, before cruelty had taught our little kinsfolk to fear their elder brother—man.

"How did you?" asked Ted.

"It's very easy; you learn their language in the woods," said Seth, and more than that he could never tell them.

Seth left the children very near Aunt Anna's, coming all the way around to make sure they were safe.

"Shall we ever, ever see you again?" pleaded Dolly.

"Often and often, dearie. I'll come for you when I'm going to gather herbs."

"Aunty, Aunty Anna, we never had such

a time!" cried the twins, bursting into their aunt's sewing room. "He talks, just talks, truly, to the birds, and they come, and squirrels, and he sees every leaf, and he knows more than anybody in all the world, and he's good—oh, my, he's awfully good! What is he? Just a common man?"

"No, indeed; a most uncommon man, my pets. He is a poor man, but not a rough one; he has gentle blood, we are sure, though we don't know anything of his family. He gathers and sells herbs, and makes essences for his customers, and so he gets the little money he needs for his simple life. No one but children and the animals know him well, but I think Seth is most beautiful—he is like a lovely poem, or a strain of sweet music. I am so glad he has taken you into his friendship."

"We're going again—he said so. We're going to be friends, and we love him very much already," said Ted.

"Very much!" exclaimed Dolly. "We love him almost to death, Ted, you mean."

CHAPTER III

FRIENDS AND FOES

THE house next to Aunt Anna's had been closed ever since the twins could remember —certainly for as many as four summers. And now here was news that was most exciting! Not only was it opened, but Fritz— Aunt Anna's man, who knew far too much about horses to be mistaken in less important matters—Fritz said that "the family" had been traveling, and had come to Methley to settle down in their own house again, bringing with them not only their boy and girl, aged nine and eight respectively, but two other little girls of their own children's age, who were cousins of the Rowleys. Rowley was this family's name, and Ted and Dolly thought it rather a queer one.

Ted and Dolly had not had the slightest desire for any companionship but their own, yet when they heard that on the other side of the hedge, and behind the green blinds of the big white house so near their quarters, were four children no older—or not more than a year older—than they were, they were on fire with impatience to hunt them up.

Aunt Anna went at once to see her old neighbor, whom she had liked, and came home to report that Tony Rowley and his sister Bess had grown into nice little people—they had been not much beyond babyhood when she had last seen them—and that the two little girl cousins—Howell was their name, Lillian and Ethel Howell—had pretty manners, and looked bright and lovable. Tony's name, Aunt Anna explained, was a joke; his name was really Frederick, but when he was a tiny boy, and his nurse read him The Frog Who Would a-Wooing Go, Tony used to insist that the "Heigho, Anthony Rowley," meant him. So all the

grown-up Rowleys began to call the baby Anthony, and then Tony, at first for fun, but after a while they almost forgot that Fred was his proper nickname, and he was Tony to the present day.

All these things sounded so pleasant and attractive, that Ted and Dolly found waiting to see these interesting children almost beyond their strength, though Aunt Anna said that she would take them over to the Rowleys just as soon as she thought Mrs. Rowley was ready to let them come. They began to neglect their play, and the animals must have wondered what had happened to them, for instead of spending hours among them, Ted and Dolly forsook their dumb friends, and sat motionless behind the hedge, with their eyes glued to openings between the shrubs, watching for glimpses of bright colors and gray knickerbockers, for the hedge was too thick to let them see much more of their new little neighbors.

One morning Ted and Dolly, kneeling on the grass, saw through the hedge the three

little girls and one boy next door, disappearing down the slope behind the Rowley house, and knowing that this meant that they were starting off somewhere by the back road, Ted rose up and dusted his knees, saying briefly: "Come on; let's do something."

"Wait till I look—there's a grasshopper, I guess, in my stocking top," said Dolly, dropping over sideways and sitting down, and turning down the top of her stocking, from which she set free a young grasshopper who had not yet learned the difference between black stockings and green grass.

"Now, come on," said Dolly. "What'll we do?"

"We might go walking," said artful Ted, not without a hope of meeting the other children whom he had seen starting out.

Dolly saw through the plan. "We sha'n't meet the Rowleys, 'tisn't likely," she said. "And if we did, what would be the use? You wouldn't speak to 'em, and I never could, and they'd feel that way, too. So we'd only walk right past, and be stiff."

"Well, I didn't say anything about the Rowleys, did I?" said Ted, flushing. "It would be nice to go for a walk. Aunty Anna said we might go down toward the falls alone, if we'd promise, solemn honest, not to go in 'thout some one was with us."

"I'd like that," said Dolly. "We haven't been that way yet this year. Come on, and tell aunty what we're going to do."

The twins ran to the house; it was understood that when they left the grounds they must report themselves first, and tell some one which way they were going. Aunt Anna had no objection to the walk in the direction of the pretty falls, and Ted and Dolly ran down through the orchard, calling back to Aunt Anna as they started a fresh promise not to think of going into the glen where the falls were, and still less to venture, now or ever, near the slippery rocks which bordered them. And one reason why the twins had so much freedom was that they never broke a promise, and Aunt Anna knew that when they said they would do a

thing, or would not do what she had forbidden, they would keep their word though the sky fell.

The road to the falls was the prettiest walk in Methley; it ran down hill all the way, and the only drawback to it was that if you went down when you started, it followed that you had to go up when you came back, and that was the tired and hungry end of the walk. But the twins' strength was quite enough to let them take a higher hill than this with plenty of breath, and plenty of courage, so they skipped down the road hand in hand, hop, skip, and jump step, as gay as gnats.

It was a very shady road; the trees reached to the middle of it from each side, and then overlapped. It was a pretty road; full of bends and turns, running on ahead of the children like a road that had the greatest mind to hide away from them, but didn't, because it knew it would be mean to leave them suddenly with no road to walk on, yet was so sore tempted to do it that it

kept trying curves and dips to see how it would feel to go quite out of sight.

All down its length, and especially at these bends, Ted and Dolly kept sharp eyes out for glimpses of bright dresses or a boy's straw hat, but nothing of the sort could they spy, though it seemed certain that the Rowley children must have come this way.

"They had such a long start of us," said Dolly, in that provoking girl's way of hers of knowing what a person was thinking, for Ted hated to have even her suppose he had taken so much trouble to meet the new children—it was different peeping at them through the hedge to see what they were like.

"Who?" he asked.

"Why, them, of course," said Dolly. "How did we happen to come off without asking Trusty?" she added, stopping short. "We forgot Trusty, and he'd have waggled to come!"

"Just forgot him," said Ted. "We can't go back after him. We'll take another

walk just for him after dinner. Look at that big pig down there in that turn of the road."

"Yes. Oh, my! Ted, just see! There are little pigs with her—four or several," cried Dolly. "Aren't they white and sweet? I love pigs, don't you? I think they're not understood. I'm sure they don't like to live in such horrid places as people put them in, so fearfully dirty! You see how they come to walk on this pretty road when they get a chance, and they're as white! When I grow up I mean to see if I can't help pigs."

Ted was used to Dolly's pity and sympathy for all kinds of animals. Once, when she was only five, she spent weeks talking of nothing but tigers and panthers, and wondering if they were not loving animals at heart, and if she went to live among them if she could not pet them. She never tried it —there wasn't much chance to try it—but she still had the same longing to make things pleasant for the creatures most people did not like.

So Ted merely said in reply to Dolly's eagerness: "I wonder whose pigs they are?"

"There's a house 'way in there on that side," said Dolly. "Prob'ly they came out from there. I think those little pigs are perfectly dear!"

So it was with the kindest feelings toward big Madam Grunt and her babies that the children drew nearer her, but Her Pigship was not a mind reader. She raised her head and stopped grubbing, and looked at Ted and Dolly out of her little eyes with an expression that would have told them plainly, if they had stopped to see, that she thought them out of place on her quiet road, and not very nice children wherever they were.

Ted and Dolly did not stop to see; they came hopping, skipping, and jumping along, Dolly more and more delighted with the pink and white piglets, and Ted admiring them no less, though more silently.

Suddenly Madam Grunt put her head

down, uttered a cry of rage, and charged full at poor Ted and Dolly, just as they came close to her.

Ted seized Dolly's hand and began to run. There was no mistaking the fact that the big pig meant sternest business, and the children were dreadfully frightened. Ted thrust his cap in his pocket, and held fast to Dolly, who could not get over the ground as he did. But Dolly did her best, and they broke into a pace that was very fast for short legs. The worst of it was that the pig could run, too—and run she did, head down, tail out, until it looked straight in the wind, and the dust flew up under her cloven feet as they raced down the road.

The little pigs scattered, and ran squealing in all directions, taking fright from their mother's excitement, but not understanding what she wanted them to do. And hearing her babies squeal, the old pig got more furious, for she felt certain that all Ted and Dolly had come for was to steal them, and she wanted them to understand that there

was no use in trying to fool her—nor fool with her.

So the race kept up. Dolly began to stumble, losing strength and breath, and she wanted dreadfully to cry, but she wouldn't cry if Ted didn't, and Ted was only trying to cheer her on, holding her tight, like a true man, though he might have got away twice as fast without her. All down the winding road they went, the pig chasing, the twins racing—and keeping ahead, but losing ground as Dolly began to give out. It looked pretty bad for them, when they heard a shout from the thick trees and shrubbery on the right, and four children burst out, sticks in hand, and drew up right across the way, howling like Indians.

Even in their excitement the twins recognized their neighbors, but the pig did not recognize them—perhaps it would not have mattered if she had. Four more children were rather too much for her, and these made noise enough for fourteen; besides, they waved their sticks, and stood right across

her path in a way that made Madam Grunt stop to think. When she stopped to think, the children helped her decide by making even more noise than before and waving their sticks harder, so the big pig made up her mind that a mother's place was at her children's side, and, turning around, trotted quietly back up the road to get them together, and tell them why pig children were nicer than human ones.

Victory perched on the strangers' banners, but now that Madam Grunt was disappearing up the road, the children began to feel embarrassed on each side, and did not know what to do next. But you couldn't stare silently at four neighbors who had just saved you from a rampant pig. Ted felt this, and broke the ice.

"We're much obliged," he said.

"You looked awful funny," returned the other boy. "Say, I didn't know pigs would go for you."

"They don't get much chance in pens," said Ted.

"They ought to stay in pens," added one of the girls decidedly. The twins found out later she was Ethel Howell.

"Well, you know all animals fight for their babies," said Dolly, panting, but feeling obliged to apologize for her late enemy, from whose attack she was still trembling on the verge of tears. "That pig had little ones, so she drove us off. I suppose it wasn't really her fault. But I was scared 'most to death, and I couldn't have kept up running. You live next door to our Aunt Anna."

"Yes. And you're the Tarleton twins—mama said she was going to ask you over to see us this very afternoon," said Bessie Rowley.

"We were going to take Trusty to walk, because we forgot him this morning," said Dolly. "But we'd love to come."

"We've a dog—a little one, all hair. He's a Yorkshire terrier, and his name is Yorick. Papa named him," said Tony Rowley.

"Yorick! what?" asked puzzled Ted.

"Oh, that's just a Shakespeare word; Yorick's a man in Shakespeare, only he isn't in the play except his skull. I don't know much about him myself. Papa said it was because Yorick in the play was full of fun, and so's our dog," explained Tony.

"Trusty's lovely," began Dolly, but Ethel Howell interrupted her.

"Were you going down to the falls?" she asked.

"We don't go to them without somebody grown up," said Ted. "We were just walking."

"Not when we saw you," said Tony Rowley, and they all laughed.

"Did you ever go to New York?" Tony continued.

"Go there! Why, we don't have to," said Ted. "We live there."

"Oh! Well, so do we in winter. Let's play we are the Twenty-second Regiment marching home from a big battle," proposed Tony.

"They always want to play things like that—boys," said his sister. "But I don't care, do you?"

Dolly shook her head. "Ted and I play all kinds of things," she said. "I like to play soldiers pretty well."

"I don't," said Lily Howell, almost in a whisper. For a wonder her name suited her. She was a delicate, blonde little creature, and held her head on one side in a manner not unlike a lily on an August day.

"We'll play girl things now we've found Dolly," said Bess, giving Dolly a hug of welcome. "You're name is Dolly, isn't it? Mama said so."

"Dorothea Anna Tarleton," said Dolly, "but I'm always just Dolly. Ted is Theodore Ainsworth Tarleton—we've got our two grandmothers' names, and Theodore and Dorothea are just the same name turned around. That's 'cause we're twins."

"Doesn't it feel queer to be a twin? What's it like?" asked Bess curiously.

"I don't know; I was born one, so I can't tell how it does feel. It's nice—I know that," said Dolly.

"Tony's a year older than me—I'm eight—mama said you were eight, too," said Bess. "Ethel's nine, and Lily's 'most eight."

"What's the difference?" interrupted Tony, with manly impatience of these things. "Are we going to march, or not?"

"Yes, of course. You be the general, 'cause you saved us," said Ted nobly.

But Dolly suddenly protested. "I won't go past that pig again," she said. "Not if we have to go around three towns."

"We'll march down to the fork, and come around the other way," said Ted. "We'll show you, Tony, if you don't know the way yet. It's farther, but I guess it's easier, with wild pigs out. Fall in line! Forward—No, I forgot. You give the orders, Tony."

Tony willingly took command, and the regiment began to move. In spite of the

longer course, the children got home in time for dinner. And they knew the new children next door with a friendliness far away from the distant glimpses of them through the hedge with which the day had begun.

CHAPTER IV

DOLLY'S DAMES

It is curious how one thing leads to another when once you begin. For instance, before the twins knew their little neighbors they had some trouble in finding a good peephole in the hedge through which to watch them, but after they knew them they discovered, almost at once, a place where the shrubs had grown thin—so thin that it was easy to crawl through into the next place without going around to the gate.

Dolly found Bess and Ethel and Lily a great addition to Methley, and Ted had good times with Tony, who, though he was not really more manly than Teddy, took pains to be very boyish, and showed Ted lots of

harum-scarum tricks he would never have thought of for himself with only Dolly for his comrade.

Ethel was a very daring young person, but it was Dolly who took the lead with the three new girls—that was why—that, and because it sounded well—that their society was called "Dolly's Dames." For in less than a week the four little girls had formed a society, and Aunt Anna and Mrs. Rowley made their gowns.

They had long skirts, gored, and with trains, and ruffled—real grown-up skirts—and grown-up waists, buttoned up in front, and trimmed, and high-collared, and their bonnets were models of style, and were worn on hair done up on the top of the head, with the front hair pulled up and out into a great looping pompadour, exactly like the fashion books, and every lady had a parasol, and a card-case.

Bess was Mrs. Elizabeth Bashlaflue, Ethel was Mrs. Ethel Hortensia Fitzlippet—both names they made up themselves; Lily

was Mrs. Lillian Gazelle—because the gazelle was her favorite subject just then—and Dolly was Mrs. Dorothea Avenel, for no particular reason, except that she thought it sounded pretty.

"We'll have four houses," said Mrs. Bashlaflue, "on our lawn, and we'll live there except it rains—then we'll go up in the third story, for there's lots of room up there, and nobody comes."

"What'll the boys be?" asked Mrs. Dorothea, whose heart yearned after her twin.

"We don't need 'em," said Mrs. Fitzlippet decidedly. "It would be horrid for two of us to have husbands, and not the other two, and we don't know enough boys for us all."

But neither Mrs. Avenel nor Mrs. Gazelle was so strong-minded. "We might have them for callers and doctors," suggested the latter. "I like them to play."

When the boys were invited, however, there was the same difference in their view

of joining the girls that there was in the girls' opinion about having them.

"We could be soldiers away at the war most of the time, and we could be husbands for two of you—I could be Dolly's husband, and Tony could be Bess's—and Ethel and Lily could be widows, with their husbands killed in the same war," said Ted.

"Well, we'll play maybe, sometimes, if it rains or something, and we have any time, but we don't expect to have much time," said Tony.

"What are you going to do?" demanded Ethel, who always loved to join Tony's plays, if she did scorn asking him to play hers.

"We'll show you when it's done," hinted Tony. "We're making something. We won't tell you what."

"Don't, then," said Ethel, knowing quite well there was no use in teasing Tony. "Come on, girls; we'll go get dressed, and begin."

She sailed away with her head in the air, and Bess followed cheerfully, but Dolly and

Lily dragged along, looking over their shoulders at Tony and Ted crawling through the hedge.

When the four returned they were beautiful to behold, and so charming as miniature women that Mrs. Rowley clapped her hands like a child, declaring that they should be photographed in their costumes the very first day she and Aunt Anna could take them to town, ten miles away.

Dolly held up her gown of soft green, with silver facings, taking care to show her silk underskirt, made from an old one of Aunt Anna's as a last touch of elegance. Her bonnet had loops of silver braid and green ribbon standing up straight on the left side, and her parasol was white—altogether Mrs. Avenel's costume was the height of delicate style.

Ethel wore red—it suited her dark hair and eyes. Her train was even longer than Dolly's, but then there was no silk skirt under it; only a stiff starched white one, like the other girls'. Her hat was a great

"picture hat" of red, with black plumes; it flapped as she walked in a way that the others considered perfectly fascinating.

Bess's colors were yellow and white, beautiful, golden yellow, with white lace and white facings, and her bonnet was every bit flowers—nasturtiums of all shades of bronze and yellow—really a dream of a bonnet!

Lily wore blue, soft blue, with lighter blue ribbons and touches here and there. Her hat shaded her face, and was made of blue velvet, darker than her dress, and forget-me-nots, half veiled with white lace, adorned it. As the four stepped across the lawn, holding up their skirts with one hand, their parasols in the other, and swinging their little figures in the pride of their beauty, the pretty colors mingling and setting off one another, they looked like ladies off a Watteau fan come to life—and not much bigger than they had been painted.

John, the coachman, had rolled out the big close carriage for the girls' especial bene-

fit. One after another they entered it, settling themselves and their skirts with a great air, Mrs. Bashlaflue getting in last, and giving directions to the imaginary coachman before shutting the door with a bang.

The ladies did not talk much during their drive; they were too occupied arranging trimmings, smoothing gloves, and looking to see that their cards were all right in their cases.

"Here we are!" cried Mrs. Avenel suddenly, and started to open the door.

"My dear! Wait for John—I mean Peter—to open it," cried Mrs. Bashlaflue in a shocked voice. "John is driving, of course, but Peter'll get right down and open the door. There, he's done it!" she added, slyly turning the handle herself. "We'll get out here. Please go first, dear Mrs. Gazelle. John, drive up and down where we can call you; we sha'n't be long." These directions were addressed to the box upon which a stylish coachman was as plainly to be seen—by any one with an imagination—

as the handsome, long-tailed horses drawing the carriage.

The lady upon whom the four other ladies were calling was at home. Her visitors seated themselves elegantly upon her green sofa—it looked like grass, but of course it wasn't, how could it be?—and conversed for three minutes—considered as fifteen—on her children and their own children, the trials of housekeeping, servants, and illness. Then the visitors departed with urgent invitations to their friend to return their call soon—Thursday, they said, was the day at home they had all taken. The only drawback to the call was that some one had to speak for the hostess, for Mrs. Tree—that was her name—had no more voice than she had body, but it was easy enough to manage that. All you had to do was to let one of the callers answer, and keep your eyes carefully away from her when you listened, and when you replied.

Several calls were paid in this way, and then Mrs. Avenel gave a cry of rapture, and,

forgetting her part for a moment, cried: "Oh, here come the boys after all!"

It was true. Tony and Ted, wearying of the lack of the girls, whom Ted had wanted all along, crawled back again through the hedge, and slowly walked over toward the ladies, doubling up with laughter as they came, for they had not yet seen the new costumes together, and they struck them as funny rather than beautiful.

"Well, if you don't look like the Lilliputians!" cried Tony, slapping his leg in manly fashion, but immediately putting his fingers in his mouth because he had forgotten the rock he had in his pocket.

"They look nice," said Ted, more politely, "but it's funny. Dolly, Aunt Anna says she thinks it's time you came over and let her see you, all of you. And Seth's come; we saw him when we crawled through, but there wasn't time to go back. Hurry up!"

"Yes, we came 'cause your Aunt Anna sent that message," said Tony, shielding his dignity behind a part of the truth.

"But we were coming anyhow; we got tired making the—we got tired, so we thought we'd play with you a while," said Ted, who had no pride that forbade him to want his sister, and to let her know it.

"We've got to go around by the gate," said Dolly. "We'd ruin our things if we crawled in 'em. Hurry up, girls; Seth's come! He's the dearest man you ever saw; gets herbs, and talks to birds, and doesn't like anybody much but children, but he's as dear—oh, you don't know! Hurry!"

"We don't want to see a strange man in our dresses," said Ethel, not making her meaning very clear, but Dolly understood.

"Seth's not a stranger; you don't know him, but the minute you see him you will. And I'm 'most certain he'd like to see us," said Dolly, leading the way to the gate with so much confidence that the rest followed with no further discussion.

"Hallo, Seth!" cried Ted, breaking into a run as he caught sight of the herb man sitting on the piazza.

For the first time Dolly saw that grown-up dress had its drawbacks, for she could not run as Ted did with her train wrapping itself around her feet, though she was quite as impatient to greet Seth as her twin was.

Seth's face lighted up with a bright smile as he saw the pretty, funny little figures coming toward him, and he rose up to greet them, half bashful, but wholly glad.

"These are Tony and Bess Rowley, next door, and Ethel and Lily Gazelle—I mean Howell—their cousins," said Dolly, who had got hold of Seth's hand and was fondling it like a kitten. "We're playing society——we're a society ourselves—Dolly's Dames; isn't it a nice name?"

"Did you ever see a more cunning little group, Seth?" cried Aunt Anna, delightedly turning first one girl and then the other round and round. "They are playing at being grown ladies, and it's very much nicer than the real thing."

"Most make-believes are," said Seth quietly. "I like best their own little mus-

lins.—I brought you something, Ted and Dolly." He pointed to a small basket that sat on the bench, back against the house.

"What is it?" cried the twins, in duet, darting at the basket.

"No; don't open it here. Come with me down into the orchard, and I'll tell you what to do with it, and where I found it," said Seth, rising. Even the children saw that he wanted to get off with them alone, so the fine ladies forgot their dignity, and taking up their skirts in both hands, followed Seth, who carried the basket. Trusty and Pukka Boy and Billy all added themselves to the procession.

"First of all," said Seth, depositing the basket on his knees as he seated himself on the grass, and warding off Pukka Boy, who was inclined to investigate its contents, "it always seemed to me that making wild creatures prisoners wasn't quite the right way to love them. But I found this little thing without a mother, and he'd have died if I hadn't taken him, so I took him. I

haven't time to bring him up myself, but I thought maybe you, twin boy and girl, had room for one more love in your hearts, and would bring up this orphan for me—I don't mean for myself, because he is yours, of course, but instead of me. His name is Baby Bunting."

The children had not supposed that Seth could say so much at a stretch, but there was no time to wonder at this when there was the basket, unopened, and evidently holding something that was alive.

"Let us see, Seth—please let us see this minute!" cried Dolly, leaning heavily on Seth's arm, while both boys laid their weight on his shoulders, and the three other little girls, forgetting that he was a stranger, hung on him at any point they could.

Seth smiled into the flushed faces, and opened the basket, slowly and tantalizingly. There, cuddled down in white cotton, was a tiny, very tiny baby rabbit, as brown and dusty as a bit of lint, for which he might have been mistaken if it had not been for the

big, frightened eyes and the long quivering ears.

"Don't take hold of him," warned Seth. "They are easily harmed. I wouldn't take him out of the basket for a few days. Feed him in it, and don't touch him except to stroke him. And keep him away from Pukka Boy; he thinks he's a fur ball."

The children gently touched him with their finger tips, taking turns to do so, and hoping Baby Bunting would soon learn not to shrink from them—Seth said he would, and Seth knew.

"I'll come and help you make a house for him when he's big enough—somewhere safe from dogs," said Seth, rising. "I must go now, because I've much to do before dark. You can go on with your party." And he smiled at Dolly's Dames.

"We hadn't a party; we were playing grown-up ladies. We'd like very much to have you stay and play with us," said Lily, leaning hard on Seth's knee and looking up at him pleadingly. She was a shy little girl,

but she recognized Seth for one of her own people.

Seth smiled back, well pleased. "I am afraid I wouldn't know how to play grown-up ladies," he said. "I'll come again in a few days to look after Baby Bunting."

Ted and Dolly had been brooding over the tiny rabbit, cooing to him, and telling him how perfectly safe he was. They now thrust the basket into Tony's hands for safe keeping, and each seized one of Seth's arms.

"We couldn't possibly thank you," said Ted. "We had everything but a rabbit, and we needed one very much. We'll take care of him our best. But we can't thank you, 'cause we don't know how."

But Dolly had an inspiration. She raised her sweet face with a pucker of the lips that no one could fail to understand. "Thank you," she whispered.

Seth understood, and flushed with pleasure. He stooped to kiss dear Dolly, and said as he did so: "That's good pay, little Sweetness."

Seth went away through the orchard, and the boys and Dolly's Dames returned to the house, Dolly bearing Baby Bunting in his basket. She was so sorry that her friends were rabbitless that on the way she arranged that Baby Bunting should be regarded as a sort of ward of the new society, because he had made his appearance when Dolly's Dames met in full dress for the first time.

CHAPTER V

CHARITY THAT BEGAN AT HOME

"I'VE thought of something," said Dolly very seriously. The children were up in Aunt Anna's garret because it had rained all night, and had not yet cleared up; the grass was soaked with water, and the gray clouds were just beginning to break away.

It was not the rain that made Dolly's face so solemn—it was her conscience, for Dolly had times of taking life gravely, and this was one of those times.

"Something to do?" inquired Tony, swinging himself up and down over the foot-board of an old bedstead, until first his head and then his heels were presented to the company.

"Something we ought to do," returned Dolly.

Ethel made a wry face. "Sounds horrid," she said shortly.

Dolly looked at her reproachfully. "It's very nice," she said. "We'd like it, 'less we're heathens."

"What is it?" asked Bess, not because she was afraid of being considered a heathen, but because she wanted to know.

"A lady called on Aunt Anna yesterday," said Dolly, "and they were talking about some kind of a club—a ladies' club. They said they thought it ought to do some good —you know—charity things. So I thought about our society, and I think we ought to do that, too. I thought about it after I went to bed, and why couldn't we be Dolly's Dames; or, The Christian Relieving Society—two names, like a book, you know? We'd be grown-up ladies, just like when we play now, but we'd relieve the poor."

"There isn't any one in Methley to relieve," said Ted.

"We could sew for them, and visit them, and do something to earn money for them," continued Dolly, disregarding her brother's practical comment. "And the boys could belong—not to the Dame part of the society, but to the Christian relieving part."

"They could be wardens, or something," said Ethel, whose father held that office in a city church.

"What's that?" asked Tony, who was of a different denomination.

"Oh, I don't know just what, but they take care of money, I guess, and say what to do," said Ethel.

"We could have a nenternainment," said Lily, who found a few words in the English language still unmanageable. "A nenternainment and sell tickets, and sing, and speak—dance, maybe—and do things like that."

"Say, I'll speak The Jumblies!" cried Tony.

"We might have the entertainment in the—you know, Tony! Let's tell the girls.

The—our—" said Ted, breaking off, and beginning a wonderful series of gestures and twistings of his face as Tony failed to catch his meaning. "Oh, my; what's the matter with you? What we made!" he cried, when this, too, failed.

"Oh, that!" exclaimed Tony. "Yes, we could. Well, tell them if you want to."

"We've made a kind of a native hut up in a tree," said Ted. "It's in a fork of a tree, and we built the floor right in the fork. You go up by steps—we built 'em—and it's the dandiest thing you 'bout ever saw. We're going to play we're a tribe and be attacked by other tribes, and fight up in our hut. But we could have a fine show in it, with the people sitting down in front on the grass, and us acting up on our floor, like a platform. We were going to ask you over to see it to-day."

"That sounds nice," said Dolly cordially. "But I guess we can't settle the show now. We didn't say whether we'd be a Christian relieving society yet."

"Let's vote on it," said Tony. "All who want to get into a relieving society say aye."

"Aye!" chorused six voices with a heartiness that would have encouraged the poor, if there had been any in town.

"Then next—what's next?" asked Tony.

"Next," cried Dolly in a burst of unexpected knowledge, "we must open the meeting. It's a Christian relieving society, so I think we ought to do something kind of solemn. We'd better not say a prayer, I guess, but Ted knows a psalm. Say your psalm, Teddy."

"Yours is better," said Ted, embarrassed by the request. "Mine is Out of the Depths, but yours is The Lord is my Shepherd, and it's more fit for a relieving society, 'cause it says 'I shall not want.'"

"Don't let's have psalms," began Tony, but before he could get further, Ethel sprang to her feet, and settled the matter by saying: "No, no psalms. I'll say just this, and then you go on:

"'I thank the goodness and the grace
That on my birth hath smiled,
And made me in these latter days
A happy Christian child.'

Now, that's enough. That's all we need. What comes next?"

"Next," said Ted, who had been thinking, "you vote for officers. We have to have a president, and treasurer, secretary—what other officers are there?"

"Captains and generals," suggested Bess.

"Not army officers, Bess!" said Tony, annoyed by his sister's mistake.

"Let's have six officers, so we can each be one," said Dolly. "I don't know just what officers do."

"The president is the head, the secretary writes everything, the treasurer keeps the money," said Ted, proud of his knowledge. "Could we have any others?"

"We could have a reliever, to hand the poor the relief," said Ethel.

"And a beggar to ask people to buy tickets, or help us," said Lily.

"That's five—we only need one more. Couldn't it be some one to get up the entertainment? What could be her name?" asked Dolly.

"Manager," said Tony promptly. "I'd rather be that."

"Dolly ought to be president, 'cause she got this up," said Bess. "Let's say she is, and not vote."

"All right," said the others, Ethel with less heartiness, because she dearly loved to be the head of affairs.

"Who'll be secretary? Tony said he wanted to be manager," said Bess.

They all looked at Ted, who was the literary light of the society. He recognized the obligations his talents imposed.

"I will," he said slowly; it was not the most desirable post.

"Bess would make the best reliever, and Lily the best beggar," said Dolly.

"I'd be scared to beg," said Lily, shrinking.

"We'd all beg, too," said Dolly comfort-

ingly. "Only you'd be called the beggar; besides, you can coax lovely, Lily! Then, if Ethel will be the other one—what is it?—the money keeper—treasurer—we're all settled."

"And I know what we must do first!" cried Tony, who had been waiting for this moment. "There are poor in Methley, Ted Tarleton; but they don't stay here always—they are too poor to live anywhere."

"What are they? How can they help living somewhere?" asked Bess.

"They're poor wanderers. We'll go see them. They're camping here now, but they won't stay long—" Tony's explanation was cut short by Ted.

"Gipsies!" he cried. "I knew they were here, but they're not our kind of poor—I don't believe they are poor, and we won't go to see them."

"We ought to be good to all kinds of poor," said Tony. "And if you don't call it poor not to have any home but a wagon, and just wander everywhere, you just try it,

that's all! We wouldn't be much of a Christian relieving society if we wouldn't be good to a poor Gipsy! Besides, I want to go see them—they've got dandy horses!"

"I don't believe Aunt Anna would let us go," said Dolly.

"You wouldn't tell her till after you'd gone," said Tony. "She prob'ly wouldn't let you go, but she wouldn't care when you'd been—that's the way people are. When I want to do something, I do it, and then mama doesn't say a word, but she'd have said No all right if I'd been goose enough to ask her first. We'd better start right away when the rain stops—it's 'most over."

Dolly looked shocked, and Ted said slowly: "You see, we couldn't do that, because we've promised never to go outside the grounds 'thout letting Aunt Anna know where we're going."

Tony gave him a scornful glance. "Those promises are just nonsense," he said. "Nobody keeps 'em. It's funny if you ain't big 'nough to go out alone!"

"We do go alone, but we tell her where we're going," said Ted, flushing.

At the same instant Dolly said, drawing herself up proudly: "*We* keep our promises, Tony Rowley. Besides, Gipsies steal children; they're not safe."

"Oh, if you're 'fraid!" exclaimed Tony.

"We're no more 'fraid than you are," retorted Ted indignantly.

"Then what makes you such a muff?" inquired Tony.

Dolly read the signs of wavering in her twin's face; she threw herself bodily upon him, and, not understanding the sense in which Tony used the word muff, cried passionately: "Don't you go, don't you go, Teddy! Don't you break your word, not if he calls you a muff, and a boa, and a fur cape!"

Ted shook her off, annoyed by a public embrace, and Bess said: "I don't see why you can't go, Dolly; it isn't one bit of harm. Mama won't care."

"Nobody would care," added Ethel.

"Come on; it's stopped raining," cried

Tony, looking out of one of the little windows. "'Less you're 'fraid!" he added with great contempt.

"I tell you I'm no more 'fraid'n you are!" cried Ted. "But I think we ought to tell Aunt Anna."

"I won't go, not one step," declared Dolly, sitting straight down on the floor to prove how firmly she was rooted to the house and in her resolution. "We can't leave the grounds to go anywhere 'thout speaking first, and besides, I'm certain sure we wouldn't be 'lowed to go to Gipsies by ourselves. Ted, don't listen to Tony."

"No; mind your sister," said Tony tauntingly.

"I didn't think you'd be bad, Tony," said Dolly, her voice shaking.

"Why, Dolly, you're so silly," said Bess kindly. "It isn't any harm to go—Tony isn't bad."

"It mayn't be any harm for you, if your mother doesn't care, but it's harm for us, 'cause Aunt Anna does care, and we've sol-

emnly promised. I won't go, but I'll die if Ted does," moaned Dolly.

Ted wavered; he had never grieved his twin, and he always had kept his word like an honorable boy. Dolly would have won the day if Tony had not sneered, and Lily, whom Ted admired, had not giggled. He was not strong enough to be looked down upon, still less to be laughed at by a girl—a pretty, blonde little girl.

"I'll go," he said, and led the way out of the room quickly to get out of the sound of Dolly's sorrowful cry, and the sight of her tearful, horrified face.

The other children followed; only Bess lingered to beg Dolly to come, and to try to kiss her, but Dolly pushed her off, and Bess left her alone with her despair.

She stopped crying to listen to the footsteps receding down the stairs; she could not believe that Ted would not turn back from the gate. She could not see the front of the house from the garret window, so she ran down the stairs, and peered through the

parlor curtains. Ted did halt at the gate, and turn back to look at the house, but Tony pulled him by the sleeve, and Dolly's cry of "Teddy, Teddy, come back!" which Ted could not possibly hear, dropped into sobbing as she saw her twin go on his forbidden way with the other children.

Dolly cried miserably for ten minutes; then she dried her eyes, and sat up to wonder what she should do. To tell Aunt Anna that Ted had gone was out of the question. She would not tell tales; when Ted came back, as she knew him well enough to know, he would be very sorry, very, very sorry for having broken his word, and he would do his own confessing; it was not for his sister "to tell of him." Dolly felt quite clear of that. She must not go out of the grounds without first speaking to Aunt Anna, but she could not let Teddy go off with that cruel Tony, into the very mouths of the Gipsies, without her. Suppose something were to happen, and his sister were not there to help him? Yet if she asked Aunt Anna if she might fol-

low Ted, that would be telling of Ted! What was she to do? Her poor little conscience was so mixed up that it was impossible for Dolly to decide what was right under the circumstances, so, as she could not tell right from wrong, she blindly followed the bidding of her loving little heart—an aching little heart also, at this hour—and rose up to follow Ted into danger. For Dolly was dreadfully afraid of Gipsies, and firmly believed that there was no limit to their probable crimes.

Dolly got her hat, and carefully put on her rubbers, finding sad consolation in doing what Aunt Anna would have liked her to do, now that for the first time in her life she was going to do—albeit against her will—that which the dear second mother had forbidden.

Feeling like a burglar, and several other kinds of wretches, Dolly crept out of the house and ran down the driveway at top speed, lawlessly, yet with an unwavering desire to do right, breaking the law which had been laid down for her.

CHAPTER VI

BUT DID NOT END THERE

DOLLY came up with the other children at a little distance down the road.

"Did you ask Aunt Anna?" cried Ted, hailing her coming with relief.

"I couldn't ask her 'thout telling on you," said Dolly. "I'm just coming 'cause you're going, and I'm 'fraid of Gipsies—I don't dare stay home."

Ted hastily changed the subject. "Tony says maybe they'll tell our fortunes, and they've got lots of dogs and horses. It's silly to be 'fraid of 'em, Dolly," he said.

"I'd rather have Trusty, and Bevis, and Roderick Dhu," said Dolly, trudging along doggedly.

"We're going 'cause we're a relieving so-

ciety," said Bess, dimly feeling that since they were on their way there was reason in trying to make the way a pleasant one. "We haven't one thing to relieve 'em with; maybe we ought to have had the show first, and raised money."

"You have to visit the poor when you're that kind of a society," said Ethel. "If you find 'em worthy you take things afterward."

"How do you find 'em worthy?" asked Dolly, with reviving interest; it sounded to her like getting in the plumber to test the pipes—her mother did that sometimes.

"You visit 'em," said Ethel. "I know, 'cause my mother's the hardest working lady in our church, and sometimes, when she's sure there isn't a disease in the house, she lets me go with her on her rounds to learn to be sorry for people. When you get there you sit down and ask 'em all about their affairs. You ask 'em how many children they've got, and if they wash 'em, and keep 'em clean, and if they go to Sunday-school.

Then you ask 'em if their husband drinks, and how much he works, and if she works herself, and you ask her if any one else gives her things, and how much money they have every week, and if they spend it for silly things. You ask 'em all the things you can think of, and then if they answer right—the way you want 'em to—you give 'em soup tickets, and some coal, and tell 'em there's an order for groceries, and you'll be back in three weeks, 'cause half a ton of coal lasts three weeks. It's awful easy."

Her companions were deeply impressed by Ethel's wisdom, and that young lady felt quite set up by their respectful manner after her recital.

"How can you remember all that?" asked Bess.

"I've been a good many times, and I listen 'tentively; I like it," said Ethel.

"It's a little far to the Gipsies," said Lily. "I hope mama won't take me to visit the poor; I'd hate it."

"You won't go when she wants you to

now," said Ethel. "She says she hopes you won't always be shy."

"I shall be—if you have to ask all those questions," began Lily, but Tony interrupted her. "You'd better not try 'em on the Gipsies," he said. "You know beforehand they don't do most of those things."

"There's the camp," said Bess, pointing to a clearing in a small woods beside the road, not far ahead of them.

Dolly shivered, and tried to take Ted's hand, but he was in no mood to administer comfort, being in sore need himself of consolation, so he pulled his hand away from Dolly, and she walked on, more dismal than ever, for Ted never had failed her. She began to feel something like hatred for the children who had not only led him wrong, but had made him different to his beloved twin sister.

Even Tony and Ethel, who had put on a most courageous air on setting forth, went more slowly as they came upon the Gipsy camp. It was disappointing to find that the

camp consisted of but two wagons, and wholly lacked any air of adventure, not to mention beauty. A fire built in some rocks, and a kettle hung over it, was the one object that at all approached Ted's expectations.

Some blowsy women were sitting about, and many small children, lightly clad, were playing with dogs whose ancestors must have been of most breeds known to dog history. There were a few men, stretched out on the ground and smoking, but most of the camp was feminine, and among the untidy-looking women there were a few who were young and pretty, and who had made some attempt to call people's attention to the fact by putting a flower in their hair, and glass jewels about their dress.

The children saw one of these girls turn to her queerly mixed family and say something, and then all the Gipsies turned their eyes upon their little visitors.

The young woman came toward them. "So you want to see a Gipsy camp!" she said in perfectly good English. "What

pretty little people you are! Come right in, dears; Gipsies don't bite—nor Gipsy dogs either!" And she laughed, showing handsome white teeth, set off by her dark skin and red lips.

"Want your fortunes told, pretty darlings?" whined an old woman. "We can tell you just what you're going to do all your lives—and that's a long time, a long time! I wish I had as long to live as you have."

There was something rather awful about these words, and none of the children liked the old crone's looks.

"We just came to see ; we don't want our fortunes told," said Bess faintly.

"You're not old enough to care about fortunes," smiled the young woman. "Well, come in, just the same. Do you like babies? We've plenty here, and to spare. And do you want to buy baskets?"

Tony distinctly did not like babies, and there was something in this young person's eyes that made him feel as though she were making game of him. He plucked up spirit

and said: "We didn't bring any money. I made 'em come because I'd like to see the horses."

"You can't see the horses," said a man suddenly from his couch of leaves. He spoke so fiercely that Tony started back in surprised terror, and the young woman said something to the man in a tongue the children had never before heard.

He replied angrily, and she laughed, and shook her head. "Too young," she said in English, "besides he wouldn't say so if that was why he came. Why do you want to see the horses, nice boy?" she said. "Do you keep horses?"

"Yes; I thought 'most everybody had to in Methley," said Tony.

"We wanted to see the horses just because we love them," said Ted, feeling they were unjustly suspected of something, he had no idea of what. "We have two. My aunt has the finest young horse in the place —he's a beauty. I don't believe yours are as nice."

The Gipsies glanced at one another. "Very likely not," said the man, who had been so savage. "I'm sorry if I spoke cross. We haven't very good horses this year. I like to meet a boy that knows a good horse; what's your name?"

"Ted Tarleton, but my father doesn't own the horse. My father's in New York. Aunt Anna Shirley owns the horse—we're staying there," said Ted.

Dolly, who had nerves like a cat's to feel the atmosphere around her, pulled her brother's sleeve. "Don't talk to him, Ted," she whispered. "Don't tell him about Rod; I don't like him."

"Too bad we're leaving Methley to-day," said the man Gipsy. "I'd like to see that fine horse; I like a good horse as well as you do. But we'll move on this afternoon."

"I guess we'd better go," said Bess. "If they're going away we couldn't bring 'em money anyway—we wouldn't have a chance."

She spoke low, but the young Gipsy

caught her words. "Were you going to bring us money?" she asked, and her eyes fairly danced.

"We are a Christian relieving society—just we six," said Ethel with dignity. "There aren't any poor in Methley to help, so we came to see you, because my cousin said you were just poor wanderers, and then we were going to have an entertainment, and give you the money we made. Of course, if you're going away, we can't."

"Well, we're much obliged," said the girl, and laughed with all her might, throwing back her head to do so. All the other Gipsies joined in a chorus of laughter, to the children's indignation; they did not consider this a proper manner of receiving the announcement of an intended charity.

Something gave a slight, but distinct, twitch to Lily's hair. She put up her hand and wheeled around; there was no one nearer her than a big boy of, perhaps, sixteen, who was lounging into the camp, having come up the road behind the children,

and unseen of them. Lily felt for the clasp of a pretty gold chain which she wore, thinking that might have pulled her hair. To her horror there was no chain there.

"My chain, my chain—it's gone. He took it!" cried Lily, forgetting her fear in the shock of her loss, and pointing to the big boy who had just passed her.

"What's that you say?" demanded the boy, turning sullenly around.

"Is your chain gone, Lil?" demanded Tony.

Lily nodded hard. "I felt my hair pulled, and the chain was gone. That boy stole it," cried Lily, beginning to sob.

"Look here—be careful what you say," growled the boy threateningly, taking a step toward the frightened children.

"Give it back, give it back!" screamed Lily.

"Do you dare call us thieves?" cried the cross man, rising up to what seemed a tremendous height, and frowning fearfully. "Get out of here; get out this

minute, or I'll have you all boiled in that kettle."

Lily sprang away, shrieking to the others to come and never mind her chain, but the boys stood their ground.

"Get this girl's chain for her," said Ted, so bravely, doubling his small fists and facing the man, that Dolly thrilled with mingled fear for him and pride in him.

"One word more—just one!" exclaimed the man, and snatched up a knife as if he meant to have Ted's head.

"Come, come!" screamed Dolly, pulling her twin's coat wildly. Courage was all very well, but common sense was better now. The Gipsy women shook their fists at the panic-stricken children, and the black-bearded man brandished his knife.

Ted turned and so did Tony, and in turning, lost every atom of courage.

Tony seized Bess, Ted grasped Dolly tight, Ethel caught Lily, and the three pairs of would-be relievers of the poor ran for their lives, not daring to stop, nor so much

as to look around, fancying they heard the whole Gipsy camp pursuing them.

On and on they ran, poor Dolly's breathing to be heard for some distance, and Lily's getting so faint that it threatened to cease altogether. Ted slackened his pace, and ventured to look over his shoulder.

"They — they — ain't — coming," he panted, and the fugitives paused for breath.

Dolly and Lily sat down beside the road deliberately to cry; Bess's tears were falling, and Ethel was swallowing hard.

"To think," moaned Dolly, "that this happened! Yet it served us right!"

"It served *me* right, you mean," said Ted, whose conscience, pricking him from the first, had become torture to him since they had all fared so badly at the camp.

"It isn't the girls' fault—not one of you —and Dolly was good, best of all, from the very start. It's Tony and I who did it! Did you have your chain when you got there, Lily? Do you, honest, think they stole it?"

"I know they did," sobbed Lily. "I

pulled it straight just when I got there. I felt that horrid boy twitch me, only I didn't know it was a boy twitching—I thought it was my poor, poor chain pulling my hair itself—in the catch, you know. And now it's gone, and I loved it dreadfully!"

Lily moaned aloud, and Tony said grimly: "I'll get my father to go back there and lick that Gipsy. Big, black thing! He scared us 'cause he knew that boy had the chain, and he wanted to get us out. He'll see!"

"We'll never listen to you again, Tony Rowley," said Bess, turning on her brother. "Ted wouldn't have gone if you hadn't dared him, and Dolly was just as sweet! I'm going to do everything you tell me after this, Dolly dear; you see if I don't."

Dolly sighed, and arose, wiping her eyes. "We'd better be getting home," she said. "You can't tell what those Gipsies might do." In her heavy little heart she found no great pleasure in being an example; the one thing she longed for was to get Ted all to herself again, without one outsider to share

their plays and poison their joys, though she did like Bess very much, and liked the other girls too. But when she and Ted played alone there were never any thefts, any frightful Gipsies, and no disobedience of Aunt Anna.

The Rowleys and Howells parted with the twins silently at their own gate. Ted and Dolly walked slowly up the driveway with hardly a word for Trusty when he came to meet them. Aunt Anna had to be told, and how sorry she would be!

CHAPTER VII

A THIEF IN THE NIGHT

DOLLY, watching Aunt Anna at luncheon, wondered if she could suspect that the twins had something on their minds. She was so quick to see the slightest sign of trouble or sickness in them, and now they were eating very little, and not talking at all, and Dolly thought Ted looked miserable enough for the dining-room clock to have noticed it, while she felt sure her own face was no brighter than his.

But Aunt Anna, if she saw, did not betray the fact; she chatted pleasantly on all sorts of subjects which would have been interesting under more cheerful circumstances, and did not notice the children's faint replies. She did not even see that

Dolly left her best beloved chocolate pudding half eaten, and that tears were on her cheeks when she went out of the dining-room.

Ted and Dolly went out together into the garden, gathering up Pukka Boy, Billy, and Baby Bunting in his basket, to keep them company—Trusty came without an invitation—and sat in the rose arbor in melancholy silence, each scratching the cheek of a cat purring on his knee. They must tell Aunt Anna, before they had dinner, of what had happened, that was certain, for another meal eaten with the load of guilt weighing them down as it had at luncheon, was out of the question, but it took courage to walk up to their loving second mother and make the hurt, disappointed look come into her eyes which they knew would come when she learned that the children whom she trusted had broken their word. They did not know how to tell her either.

"Tony made you go," said Dolly, still resenting the fact.

"Yes, but I didn't have to," said Ted, just to himself and Tony, hard though justice made it for him. "Tony said his mother wouldn't care, so it wasn't the same as it was for me. And anyhow, you ought to stand your ground, no matter what any one says. I'm not going to be mean, as well as break my word, Dolly, and try to put it off on Tony now."

"Well," sighed Dolly reluctantly, "I know that's right, Ted, but I don't like Tony any more, and I never shall. How shall we tell Aunt Anna?"

"The only way to tell her is just to tell her," said Ted, rising to his feet so suddenly that Pukka Boy, whom he was holding, was seriously disturbed. "Come on, Dolly; what's the use of thinking and thinking? We've got to go, and the quicker it's over the quicker we'll feel decent."

Dolly got up very slowly, setting sleepy Billy down carefully on the arbor seat, and brushing a cloud of his white hairs from her blue gingham dress.

"Come, then," she said briefly, turning so pale that Ted was startled.

"You needn't feel so bad, dear; you were nothing but good," said Ted, squeezing her hand.

"I went after all, but if I hadn't I'd just as soon 'twas me as you," said Dolly, true to her twin, if not to her English.

Ted felt Dolly's devotion deeply; it brought him even lower in the dust than he had been before, and it was a very crushed Teddy upon whom Aunt Anna looked as he halted a moment in her sitting-room door, and then walked straight up to her, still holding Dolly's hand.

"Something happened, Teddy?" Aunt Anna asked, laying down her sewing, and putting out her hands.

But Ted would not let her pet him till he knew that she understood that he had broken his word to her. "We wanted—I mean we've got to tell you 'bout this morning, Aunt Anna," he began huskily. "We made ourselves into a Christian relieving so-

ciety, the rest, and Dolly and me, and then we couldn't think of any poor to help. And then Tony said there were the Gipsies over there, nothing but poor wanderers, and we might help them, and we ought to go see them, 'specially 'cause he wanted to see their horses. And we said we couldn't go outside the gates 'thout we told you. But they said their mother didn't care, and then he said I was 'fraid—and—and——"

Ted stopped short. "And you went?" cried Aunt Anna. "Broke your solemn promise to me because Tony Rowley said you were afraid to do what you knew was wrong? All strong men are afraid to do what is wrong, Theodore. Afraid of making themselves dishonorable, afraid of not being true and upright. Of course, you were afraid to break your word—didn't you tell Tony so? There are two kinds of fear, little lad, and the fear of doing wrong is not a coward's fear, but the brave man's fear. Did you go, children?"

Ted bowed his head and Dolly sobbed.

L. of C.

"Dolly, too?" asked Aunt Anna sadly.

"Dolly was all right, Aunt Anna," cried Ted. "She tried her best to keep me, but I was ashamed to do what she said, 'cause Tony—well, Tony said, I minded my sister. And Dolly sat right down on the floor, and said she wouldn't go—not one bit. And we walked off and left her. And after we were gone she came, 'cause she was 'fraid of what the Gipsies might do, and she couldn't ask you 'thout telling on me—don't you see?"

"I see," said Aunt Anna, drawing Dolly to her. "She was my conscientious little Dolly after all, but she got bewildered as to right and wrong. It would have been wiser to have told me, Dolly, and asked if you might follow Ted. Then, you see, I could have looked after his safety. It is mean to tell tales, but not to protect people from their own mistakes. But all these things are hard to learn; it takes a while to get big enough always to know what is the right thing to do—I'm not big enough yet for that!

I am so very glad you didn't mean to break your word to Aunt Anna."

Dolly did not enjoy the hint that her behavior had been better than Ted's.

"Ted would never've gone, aunty, if Tony had not done as he did," she said.

"That doesn't make a bit of difference," said Ted stoutly. "I didn't have to do it."

"No, it doesn't make any difference, Teddy; I'm glad you see that," said Aunt Anna. "And I'm glad you are so manly and fair to Tony, though I shall not like him as well for trying to get you to do what you thought wrong; it's a mean thing, Teddy, to try to push down, instead of helping up—don't forget that all your life long. Now, I think you feel very, very sorry for having broken your word and disobeyed me, for the first time in all your life, and I don't believe you need any other punishment than the shame and trouble you have had. We'll begin all over again. Promise me to be a real knight, square and upright, whom nobody can coax into dishonor, and I'll forgive

you, and trust you just as if this unhappy morning had never been."

Aunt Anna knew her boy. No punishment could have affected Ted like these loving, generous words. In spite of his manliness and his eight years, he threw himself on her shoulder, and sobbed with all his might, while Dolly cried in her lap.

"I'll promise, aunty, solemn true, black and blue, I won't be such a coward again, and I'll never, never break my word," Ted cried. "Not about gates, nor anything."

"I'm sure you won't," said Aunt Anna, kissing him. "Now, that's wiped out, and we only remember it enough to keep away from anything at all like it happening again. I am glad you came safely from the Gipsies; there is some reason for Dolly's fear of them."

"They stole Lily's chain," said Dolly. "A big boy snatched it off her neck, and when she missed it they chased us away—the cross man took up a knife, aunty!"

Aunt Anna looked frightened. "What cross man?" she said.

"The man that was dreadfully ugly when we said we'd like to see the horses," said Ted. "What harm was there in that?"

"There has been a horse stolen from Farmer Upson, and the Gipsies are suspected," said Aunt Anna. "They probably thought you had been sent to spy on them. My dears, you have been in very bad company—you see, don't you, that there is good reason for not letting children go to all sorts of places? I'm sorry about the chain—poor little Lily must have been very badly frightened."

"Oh, we were all half dead. I wish if anybody had to have something happen to them it had been Tony," said Dolly, with the lasting anger against the boy who had tempted Ted which is natural to gentle creatures, who love a few people very dearly.

The children ate their dinner with the hearty appetites which wait on minds at

peace. It was shocking, but Lady Mew, Pukka Boy, and Billy were all allowed to come into the dining-room, and Aunt Anna never minded if the children fed them—how could she mind it when she dropped them the tenderest bits from her own plate? The reason every one loved Aunt Anna was because the one object in her life was to give everything around her a good time, and let them do what made them happy—human beings or animals—as long as they did not do what was wrong.

So Ted gave Pukka Boy his tidbits, in response to the quick taps with his paw which Pukka Boy gave him to remind him—and then sat down as quick as a flash, and looked as though he had never moved! And Dolly fed white Billy, who never got enough, and jumped on her shoulder if she neglected him, and Lady Mew gravely waited Aunt Anna's kindness, which she had known for four years, and would not risk exchanging for that of new friends, and Trusty thumped the floor out in the hall with his tail, know-

ing the bone stage of dinner had not yet come.

The children went to bed rather early, being tired after their wearing day, and fell asleep the moment their heads were on the pillows. Dolly's room was on the front of the house, a dear little nest next Aunt Anna's chamber, and Ted slept across the hall in the rear. He was a very sound sleeper, like all healthy, growing boys, and rarely wakened until Aunt Anna had several times supplemented the sun's call to him to get up.

It was the more unexpected then to Ted to find himself sitting up in bed in the middle of the night, with the room perfectly dark, and to discover that he was straining to listen to something. What? He had no idea; nothing, probably, but something he had heard in a dream, as Trusty heard dogs digging up the bones he had buried, and snapped, and growled at them. So the little boy punched his pillow, and rolled it up into the ball which always distressed Aunt Anna

because it looked so uncomfortable, and was just about to plunge into it, when he did hear something, a faint, but distinct sound of a footstep on the driveway, and—could it be? Yes, it was—the stable door very slowly and quietly rolling back.

Ted sprang out of bed in his pink pajamas, and ran to the window, peering out behind the blind. No one was in sight, but Ted waited, and in a few minutes out came a man from the stable, leading Roderick Dhu by the halter, and a big boy slouched out from the shade of the lilacs and joined him.

Ted knew the man—it was the ugly Gipsy who had so frightened the children that morning—and he guessed that the boy was the thief of Lily's chain. In an instant it flashed upon Ted that his disobedience and his foolish boasting of Rod had been the cause of their coming, and all alone in the middle of the night though he was, he resolved to save Rod.

There was no time to go to waken Fritz —it took a long time to do that always—

and Aunt Anna would be frightened; besides, what could she do?

With a vague idea of making a toilet Ted hastily pulled on his knickerbockers over his pajamas, and the effect was so funny that it was a pity no one could see it. Then, slipping into his shoes, he stole down the stairs, and let himself out into the night.

Now, Roderick Dhu could not be taught to behave very well in harness, but he took to tricks and bright little ways of his own as naturally as a duck to water, and this was because he was young and full of fun. He had come out quite gently when the man had led him forth, for he was sleepy, but now the air had wakened him, and he was not quite sure whether he would go on quietly on that rope halter, or not. While he was hesitating, with a few little dancing steps to fill in the time, Ted, hidden under a bush, whistled. One of the tricks Rod liked best was to rush to that whistle—a call Ted kept for Roderick Dhu's special use—and get

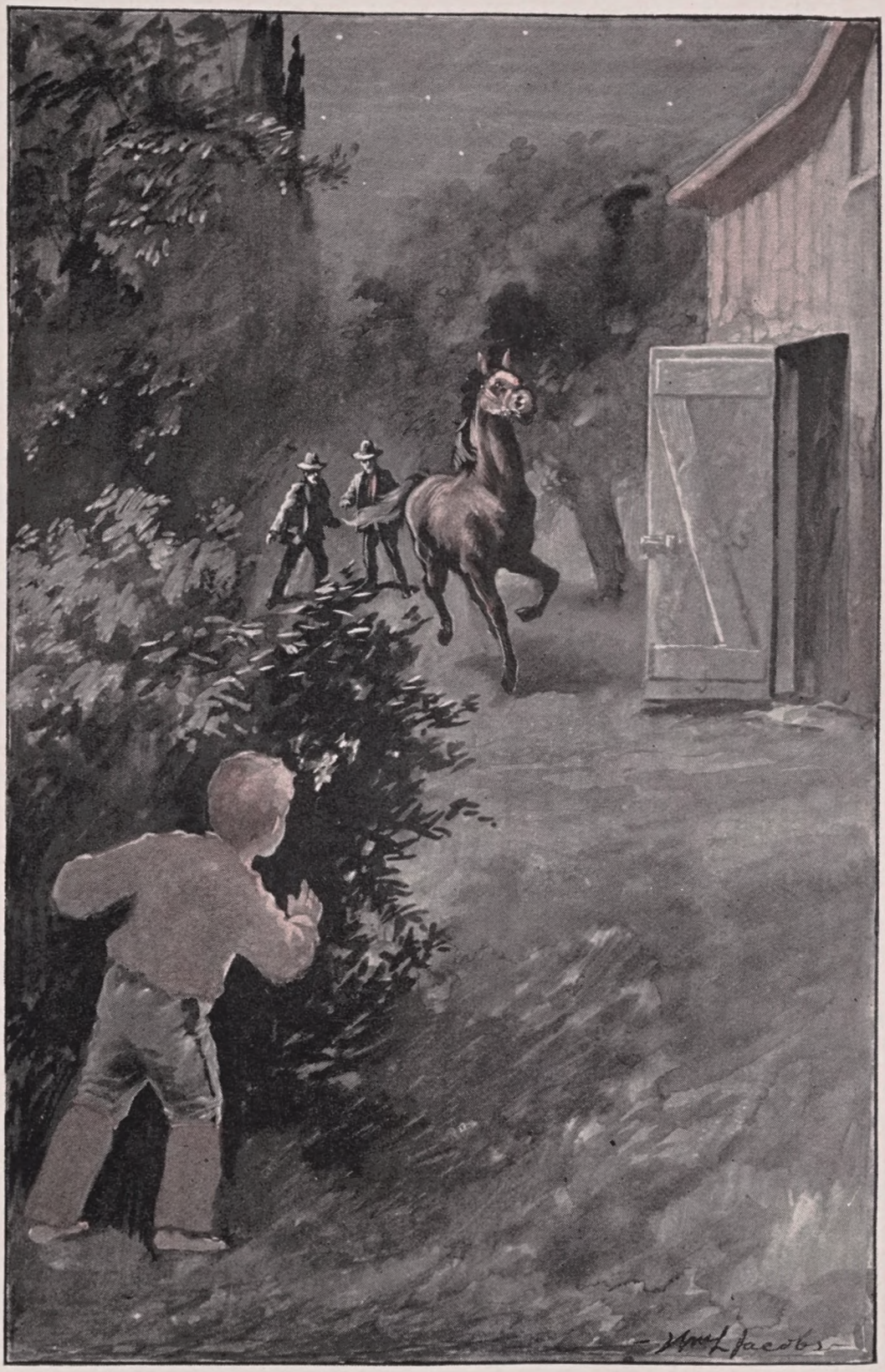
from Ted a lump of sugar as a reward for coming.

The young horse heard the call now, and it startled him, coming so suddenly in the darkness. He leaped at the sound, plunged, wrested the halter from the hand holding it a trifle loosely, because Rod was behaving so lamblike, and, breaking away, ran directly toward Ted, then stopped short, not seeing him.

The young Gipsy started in pursuit, but the older one grasped his shoulder.

"Stand still, you fool," Ted heard him say in a whisper. "Wait."

Again Ted whistled, and Rod came on slowly, but head up and feet dancing, so full of fun, and life, and beauty that Ted went a little daft with excitement and pride in him. He darted out in full sight of the Gipsies, and caught the dragging halter. "Quick, Fritz! Shoot 'em!" he shouted to an imaginary Fritz at his side. And as he shouted he had the great satisfaction of seeing the two Gipsies take to their heels and run for



Again Ted whistled, and Rod came on.

their lives. It never occurred to them that the child who looked so small in the darkness in his funny costume was the only one who had come out to save Roderick Dhu.

Ted began to shake when he found himself the victor on the field, but he led Rod back into the stable, who came quite willingly, nosing Ted's hands and sides where the pockets ought to be, and wondering why he should not have his sugar on the spot.

Ted got him into his stall, but could not tie him; he said a word in passing to surprised old Bevis, and pulling the door to, ran into the house and up to Fritz.

"Fritz, Fritz, get up and lock the stable, and stay there till morning. The Gipsies stole Rod, but I heard 'em and got him. Hurry!" he cried, hauling Fritz half out of bed in wild excitement.

"Of all de tings I effer haf heard!" exclaimed Fritz. "Aber, I doan't unnerstand you—Vat you haf done, hey?"

"If you wait to understand Rod will be

as old as Bevis," cried Ted, dancing up and down wildly. "Go out and stay—he came when I whistled—got away from the Gipsies! Oh, go, Fritz, and understand in the morning!"

Fritz went, half believing it was not Rod, but a nightmare Ted had seen. The footprints on the driveway, the unfastened door, the sight of Roderick Dhu wandering up and down the stable among the carriages, with his halter hanging, and his legs in danger, convinced Fritz that Ted had not been dreaming.

He made things right and tight and mounted guard, while Ted went back to bed, but not to sleep. Excitement had driven sleep from his eyes, and for the first time in his life Ted saw the sun rise. Then he fell asleep, and Aunt Anna did not call him, having learned from Fritz all he knew of Ted's adventure.

When Ted opened his eyes it was nine o'clock, and Aunt Anna and Dolly were watching him, ready to hug him when he was

ready to be hugged. For though he had been naughty, and had foolishly brought Rod into danger, he had bravely ventured out to save him, and his loving aunty and adoring twin were very proud of Ted, their hero.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRINCE PIPSISSEWA

BABY BUNTING grew so fast that it was marvelous that so small a creature as he was at the beginning should have so much growing power in his tiny body.

Dolly remarked this, but Ted pointed out to her that a yeast cake was far smaller than Baby Bunting, and it could spread even faster than he did.

There was no question now of keeping him in his basket; he hopped out and after his foster parents every time it pleased him, for his quivering little nose soon found the way to pry up the basket lid, and make a way for his long ears to follow. Ted and Dolly began to think that they must make his house without Seth's help if he did not turn up

soon, but just as they had made up their minds to trying their hand at a rabbit cottage, Seth came.

Since the visit to the Gipsies the twins had played less with the children next door; for a few days they were too vivid reminders of an unpleasant morning, and the worn spot under the hedge got no new wear, for the neighbors all stayed on their own side.

Seth came up the road this time; not through the orchard, and Ted and Dolly, spying him from the window, ran rapturously to meet him. Trusty bounded at him and nearly knocked him down with the enthusiasm of his greeting, stretching up his paws to Seth's shoulders, and licking his chin with more love than wisdom.

Ted and Dolly each seized an arm of their friend, according to their custom, and so he came triumphantly to the house.

"Haven't you any pets, Seth?" asked Ted, seeing the loving look with which Seth received the attentions from Trusty which

most people would have resented. "I've never thought of it, but it's queer you haven't any dog."

"Do you think I could have all the wild creatures for pets—the birds and the rabbits and the squirrels—if I had a dog barking on ahead of me through the woods?" asked Seth. "To be sure, I could have a dog, and keep him at home, but it wouldn't be very kind to make him love me, and then never to let him go to walk with his master, would it? I have cats, five nice ones, but I couldn't have a dog unless I gave up my beautiful woods wanderings, and walked the streets like other people. And I never could do that—I never have done it since I was younger than you are."

"Did you always live in Methley, Seth?" asked Dolly, for the first time wondering what sort of a childhood this man, who seemed so closely kin to nature, had had, and where it had been spent.

"No," said Seth quietly, "I lived where there were mountains—in Vermont. It

used to frighten my mother to have me wander off from the other children, but I never came to harm. Only they used to say that Seth would always be poor—and they were right. My brother was the other sort; he never liked to be alone, and the only plays he cared for were noisy ones—I was afraid of his sports, and he feared my solitudes." Seth's eyes looked more far-away than ever as he spoke; he seemed to be seeing the big, hearty, noisy boy who was his brother, and the silent child who had been himself. The children did not know that never before had he spoken to any one in Methley of his former life.

"Are you poor, Seth?" said Ted, catching at a hint.

"Do rich men go about selling herbs, Teddy?" asked Seth with his gentle smile. "My wants are few, and I have always lived. I believe that I still shall live, but the way is not always quite plain."

"Does Aunt Anna know?" said Dolly, for if Aunt Anna knew Seth's troubles Dolly

felt certain, from her own experience, that they could not last long.

"No, no, oh, no, indeed," said Seth with an anxious look. "There is nothing to know. I shall be quite happy, dears; I have my little house, the autumn winds give me fuel from my friends, the trees; my food comes from the kindly earth, chiefly, and even though my customers are few now, I shall be comfortable. But I must feed my dumb friends, and that is not so easy."

"It must be fun to live that way and not need hardly any money," said Ted. But Dolly did not look satisfied. Child though she was, she felt that Seth's cheerfulness was forced, and an instinct told her that forced cheerfulness was more pathetic than complaints.

Baby Bunting's residence drove all other thoughts out of the children's minds for the time, however. The lot it occupied was three by four feet, situated in the corner of the orchard, near the house, where there was precisely the right admixture of sun and shade.

Seth built the house of lathes while Ted and Dolly held the nails and hammer. None of the cats belonging to the house was so untaught as to molest Baby Bunting now that he had moved into his own home, and it was built on the place—besides he was too big to be mistaken for a fur ball now. As to Trusty, he would not harm anything, no matter where he found it, and there was no danger of strange dogs venturing on Trusty's premises. So Baby Bunting would be as safe in his new quarters as in a safe-deposit vault and decidedly more cheerful.

"We're going to take him to the city with us in September, if mama will let us; would that be cruel, Seth?" inquired Ted. "We'll let him go if you say he'd like it better."

"No; I think if you pet him all summer, it would be cruel to let him go, for he would not be able to take care of himself," said Seth. "Now, it is all done. We'll put Baby Bunting in, give him some unusually nice clover, and take a little walk, if you please, boy and girl."

Decidedly the children pleased. "You lovely Seth!" cried Dolly jubilantly.

"We'd rather go to walk with you, Seth, than do anything else in all this world," said Ted solemnly. "And we saved some lettuce to give Baby Bunting when he moved in; he'd rather have it than clover. Did you call him Baby Bunting 'cause his father got a rabbit skin to wrap him in? I never thought of it till yesterday."

"That's just why," said Seth, as Dolly cried: "Oh, didn't you know? I saw that the first thing."

"There has some one come to town; I want to introduce you to him," said Seth. "He's a prince, but he is traveling *incognito*, which is what royal folk do when they don't want any one to find out they are royal. I don't want to tell you very much about him, but I'll tell you one thing—when he goes among the Indians, as he sometimes does, he tries to cure them."

"Where is he? What do you mean? Hasn't he a name?" cried the children.

"Indeed he has a name, but I can't tell you that till we meet him," said Seth. "And I'll take you to him, which is the best way of telling you where he is: so come, if you're ready. Put the rabbit in his house, and run tell your aunt that your queer, foolish Seth is going to take you to the woods again, if he may."

"You are not foolish; you're the wisest man in all the world," said Dolly, with entire conviction, as she gently lifted Baby Bunting from his basket and set him down on his beautiful grass carpet. "We're ready," she added, wiping her hands on the grass.

Aunt Anna was sure never to say No to a walk with Seth, so Ted and Dolly were soon happily under way, clinging to Seth's hands and taking rapturous skips every little while as they walked down the road. Trusty was allowed to come, he was so sensible, and besides he was so used to going with the children that it would have been hard to have said him nay.

All the way down the road Ted and Dolly tried to guess who, or rather what, the prince could be, for, of course, they did not expect to find a real prince awaiting them in the woods. Knowing Seth, they were sure it would prove to be either a bird, or beast, or blossom, but Seth would not satisfy their curiosity; rather he whetted it to as sharp a point as he could, till before they got to the woods Ted and Dolly were quite frantic to see the prince.

They turned in by a narrow path which almost at once ran into the shadow of big trees, away from the sunshine. It was a charming little path, winding to the right, bordered with most of the plants the children knew and loved in their woods walks—the wintergreen, the beautiful white-veined partridge-vine, sassafras, and violets nearly two months past their blossoming. Trusty ran swinging along, snuffing the many sorts of fragrance with unmistakable pleasure, and the children walked more quietly at Seth's side, less eager for the prince now

that they had come into their own proper kingdom.

But they did not lose interest in him, and when Seth turned away from the first path into a still narrower one running at right angles with it, saying, "The prince is staying down here," they pricked up ears and opened eyes, ready for his royal highness, Prince Unknown.

They could walk in this path only single file, so Seth took the lead, and Ted, then Dolly followed, Trusty bringing up the rear like a respectful, polite dog.

They came to a sandy spot, overstrewn with the brown leaves of more than one summer. Here Seth paused. "There, children," he said, "there is the prince."

Ted and Dolly stared hard all about them, but could see nothing save a large patch of shining green leaves rising above the dead leaves feeding them, with long stems standing up straight and tall here and there among the bright green foliage, and each stem crowned by a cluster of delicate white

blossoms, making the air fragrant all about them with their sweetness.

"Where?" cried Ted and Dolly. "Where, Seth?"

"Right at your feet," said Seth, smiling. "There he is, the Prince Pine—people who don't understand call him Prince's Pine, but you can see that can't be right. When he comes to Methley, and hides away in the woods like this, not wishing to have it known that he is a prince, he is called just Pipsissewa."

"Is it only that flower?" asked Ted disappointedly. Dolly's face had fallen a little, but she was so considerate of Seth that she was trying to hide her disappointment.

"Only that flower? Ah, you see how well he is disguised!" said Seth, seating himself, while the children threw themselves half across his knees as a matter of course. "Now, I'll tell you. Pipsissewa came here once, long years ago, when the Indians owned all these hills, and he was a little white prince, perfectly beautiful, and as

sweet as a child could be. And he played in these woods with a gay little Indian girl, and was very fond of her, for she did not know he was a prince, but called him in her own tongue, Pipsissewa, and the prince was happier than he had ever been at court. They played together happily for several summers, and then there came a summer in which the prince returned as usual, to be sure, but the little Indian girl he loved did not come to play with him, and he was sad. And he soon learned that the white men had driven the red men quite away, and that he should never again find his bright playmate. So he got the fairies which belonged to the king, his father, to work for him, and make him a charm by which he could take the form of a lovely flower, and sit, unseen of man, sheltered by his disguise, and wait in these woods for his little friend's possible return, should she come, or if she did not, sit and think of her. And the leaves of the plant in which the prince hid were to be always green, to show that he never lost hope, nor

changed in his longing for his lost comrade. And so, every summer, dear children, if you come here, you will always find the Prince Pine, or Prince's Pine as people call him, waiting and making the air sweet with the fragrant thoughts he is thinking of the old days, and you will know that it is the lost little Indian girl's dear Pipsissewa."

"What a dear story!" said Ted, thinking how he would wait forever, always lonely, if he lost Dolly.

"Did you bring us here, and make that all up just to please us, dear, dear Seth?" asked Dolly, admiring and grateful.

"You didn't make it up?" cried Ted.

"I made it up if any one did," said Seth. "But why do you think it isn't true?"

"It is true; I'll have it true," said Ted.

"No; it's a darling story, but it's just a story, 'cause it's too sad to be true. I want the sweet Pipsissewa happy. And I know the rest of the story!" cried Dolly, springing to her feet with her face alight with pleasure. "At night, when all the big world's

asleep, the same fairies that changed the prince bring back the little Indian girl to her woods, and they wave their wands and make Pipsissewa a live little prince again, and they play together all night long, and don't have to kiss each other good-by till the sun is beginning to peep up. Isn't that nicer?"

"Much nicer, dearie," said Seth, stroking her flying hair. "I did not know you were a little poet, though I might have known it. I hope it will be very long that you believe things too sad to be true. Shall I take you home now, my Twinlets?"

"Yes, if we must," sighed Dolly reluctantly. "No one ever loved some one, and missed her always and always, did he, Seth? That's why that's so sad—your story."

"No one who came to the woods when he was lonely, like our Prince Pipsissewa, ever failed to find peace, my pet," said Seth. And Dolly was not quite sure that she was fully answered.

CHAPTER IX

A SPLENDID PLAN

"I WONDER if Seth's very poor, aunty?" said Dolly suddenly that night at twilight. She was curled up in her Aunt Anna's arms, rocking cozily in one of the big chairs on the back piazza, watching the young moon going down in the west, and at the same time watching Ted give Baby Bunting his supper, for it was Ted's turn to perform that duty.

"What made you think of that?" asked Aunt Anna. "I have been wondering the same thing of late. Had you any reason for asking?"

"I don't know. I don't know just what he said, but when we were out to-day I was 'fraid he was poor. He seemed sort of sad,

and 'sif he didn't want us to know," said Dolly.

"No one knows much about Seth, dearie; he lives so entirely alone, except for his child and animal friends. Of course his wants are few, but he has not nearly so many customers as he had, and I, too, have been afraid of late that he might want for comforts—perhaps necessities—and none of us guess it," said Aunt Anna. "We will try to find out about it, but it would be a hard matter to help Seth."

Ted came running up from the rabbit's residence, wiping his hands dry of the moisture from the lettuce and vegetables by the simple method of rubbing them on his gray knickerbockers.

"Look here, I've got such an idea!" he cried breathlessly. "It's just out of sight! We'll do it—it'll be ours, I mean—but we'll get the Rowleys and Ethel and Lily to help. We'd better go and see them the first thing in the morning."

"What a warm, excited Teddy!" ex-

claimed Aunt Anna, pushing back the boy's hair. "What is the great idea, Ted, and did Baby Bunting whisper it to you?"

"No, sir; it's a bigger idea 'n Baby Bunting's brains could get up," said Ted proudly. "Dolly and I'll start a newspaper!"

"Well! there's glory for you, surely!" cried Aunt Anna. One of the best of Aunt Anna's many good points was her love for Alice.

"How'd we do it?" cried Dolly, sitting erect, and pushing back with both hands the hair she had tumbled up on Aunt Anna's shoulder.

"Just like anybody else," said Ted. "We'd write the things, and print the paper, and—and—well, then 'twould be printed, don't you see?"

"What'd we do with it?" asked Dolly.

"Do with it!" echoed Ted. "Why, we'd —we'd publish it, and people would take it to read—why, just like any newspaper! Why can't you understand, Dolly?"

"She is stunned with the prospect of be-

ing an editor and publisher," laughed Aunt Anna. "It's a splendid plan, Teddy, and I'm glad you thought of it. It's nice to play things that make you use your wits. Come, sit down here and cool off.

"'I see by the moonlight it's long past midnight,
And time pig and I were home an hour and a half ago.'

It's not quite so bad as that, but it is close to eight o'clock and bedtime."

"Oh, dear," sighed Ted. "The very best thing about being grown up is you don't go to bed when you're not sleepy. I'll just lie awake, and lie awake, planning that paper to-night!"

But he did not. He fell asleep before he had got much further with the introductory editorial which he meant to write than its opening words: "Dear Readers, Gentlemen and Ladies."

The very first thing after breakfast—and the cats' and Trusty's and the rabbit's breakfast—Ted and Dolly crawled through the hole under the hedge.

The Rowleys and their cousins saw them coming, and ran to meet them, glad enough to welcome them after the late slight coolness.

"We came to tell you 'bout something perfectly grand we're going to do," cried Dolly at long range. She had got warmed up to Ted's plan during their discussion of it at breakfast; she had been too sleepy the night before to grasp it fully, or to be enthusiastic, but this morning she outstripped Ted in her excitement over his scheme.

"What is it?" the girls on the other side called back, running toward the hedge so fast that Lily's baby doll's long dress fluttered wildly in the breeze, and Bess's little girl doll lost her hat—Ethel did not care for dolls, and never carried them about as her cousin and sister did.

"It's a newspaper we're going to publish," said Ted. "We want you to help. We're going to have a meeting about it right now, in the native hut."

"You never showed me the native hut,"

said Dolly, remembering the fact for the first time.

"We've seen it; it's down 'way at the end of our place," said Bess. "Come on now, and have the meeting and then Dolly'll see it."

The "native hut" consisted solely of a flooring of pine boards, held in its place in the crotch of a tree by nails, and still more by tight wedging. The children admired it greatly, especially the very wiggly steps which led up to it, but older eyes might have viewed it with some doubt of its entire safety.

"What do we do to have a meeting?" asked Ethel, running up and down these steps twice in rapid succession.

"We all come into the hut," said Ted, "and we decide what we'll do. First, I vote that we give up the Christian Relieving Society, 'cause we haven't any one to relieve, and nothing to relieve with, and 'cause it's no fun. Who votes like me?"

"I do," echoed the other five children,

Dolly looking anxiously at Tony as she did so, fearing he would be sensitive at a reminder of the visit to the Gipsies, and dreading to hurt him, angry though she had been with him.

"Now, who will join the publishing company that's going to publish the best paper in Methley?" inquired Ted, safe in his statement, since Methley published no newspaper at the time.

Eager voices, without one dissenting, protested their desire to join in the great project.

"Dolly and you must write it," said Tony. "We can't, but we'll help print it."

"Then the editors are Mr. Theodore Tarleton and Miss Dorothea Tarleton," declared Ted willingly. "Now, what'll we call the paper?"

"The Herald," said Tony promptly, unable to soar in imagination beyond the name of the paper his father took in the city.

"The Twins' Times," suggested Ethel. "That'll mean you started it, and you tell in

it the things you do; the times you have, you know."

"Yes, but it's all of our paper," said Dolly, getting mixed in her expression of an idea quite clear to them all.

"Call it the Ours," said Bess.

"No, the Daily is better than Hours," said Tony, misunderstanding.

"Oh, don't let us publish it every day!" cried Dolly in dismay. "We've got to print it all by hand, and it would take every minute to have a paper every day—it would be worse'n school!"

"It ought to be every day," said Ted, who saw the paper as a great New York sheet. "Well, every week then at first," he yielded. "My father knows all about books and papers, and all those things, 'cause he's a fine lawyer, and went to Harvard College. I guess he takes the best paper—he'd be sure to. Let's name ours after his, 'cause he says it's fearfully bright. We'll name it The Sun."

"I never did think that was fair," said

Dolly thoughtfully. "You know the moon shines when the sun is lighting up Asia, and I think they ought to call things after it just as much. I say, let's call our paper The Sun and Moon, 'cause it's much fairer, and it will make people understand that they can read it at night just as well as in the morning. It's such a pretty name, too."

"Yes, I like that name," said Lily decidedly, and Ethel and Bess agreed with her, so the majority were strongly in favor of Dolly's suggestion, although Ted was doubtful at first, and Tony protested against it.

Tony's protest seemed to clear Ted's doubts away, however, and so the paper was named The Sun and Moon, and Ethel, who loved to draw, sat down to sketch a heading for it on the white pine boards of the flooring; a large sun rising in the midst of many rays, and a very round moon, with a smiling face in it, at the other end of the picture.

"What shall we charge for the suscriptions?" asked the founder of The Sun and

Moon, who rarely tripped on a word, but was only mortal after all.

"Twenty-five cents a year," said Tony as quickly as though he had spent months considering it.

"Oh, my; I thought about five!" exclaimed Ted.

"Have it come out every week and be only five cents a year? Do you mean a year?" asked Tony, evidently disgusted with Ted's business ability.

"Well, I did, yes," hesitated Ted.

"I sh'd think you were crazy! Who do you s'pose 'd want such a cheap thing?" demanded Tony, who had the making of a financier in him. "Twenty-five cents a year, I say."

"Do you s'pose any one'll take it anyhow?" asked Ted, with that sudden drop in his courage about the paper which is apt to follow great enthusiasm. "And how'll we get the suscribers?"

"We'll go to all the nice houses in Methley," said Tony, who was proving himself

most valuable in this part of the newspaper's founding. "We'll tell the people we're going to start a paper, and we'll ask them to take it. And most of 'em will."

"What'll we do with the money? Say, Tony, I guess we can't ask so much, 'cause the paper won't cost us a cent, 'cept a few cents for paper and things, and we can't take money like that for it," said Ted.

"We'll divvy up the money, all of us publishers, and we'll have some fun. Don't you s'pose the men that have those papers in New York make any money? Don't you s'pose we ought to make some, when we do the work, and write the stuff? I know a man—he was young, too—'bout twenty—and he got ten dollars just for one story! I guess 'twould be a nice thing if we all worked hard, and got that paper up fine, and you and Dolly wrote stories and poetry—only poetry ain't worth much—and didn't get enough to buy one ice-cream soda all 'round!" And Tony's expression was more scornful than words.

"Well, if it's fair," assented Ted doubtfully. "I don't want to do what isn't real square."

"Who does?" demanded Tony. "It's square to charge what it's worth. How much is twenty-five cents a year for each number?"

Ted looked embarrassed, but Bess, who was fond of arithmetic, said: "There are fifty-two weeks every year—twice twenty-five's fifty—why, it's only half a cent a number, and give us two weeks' vacation publishing it to make up the other two weeks. That isn't much, Teddy!"

"So it isn't!" said Ted, with a sigh of relief. "Well, then, it's all settled, and we must begin just's soon as we can."

"We ought to get the people to take it first, and then begin. Say, are you going to make a copy for every one of 'em? 'Cause if you are, we'll be dead," said Tony.

"My! I never thought of that!" groaned Ted.

"No, sir; one paper, and let it go around, or maybe two, if there's lots taking it," said Ethel, with her usual decision.

"Something's funny!" cried Dolly. "The floor's breaking! Oh, we're going, we're going!"

They were indeed. With a sudden cracking and splitting, the boards sank down on one end of the floor of the "native hut" and crashed to the ground, taking with them their freight of frightened children. It was not a long fall, but, unfortunately, the end of the flooring which had given way was the one which was most free of the friendly help of the crotch, and all six children were thrown to the earth with considerable force. Tony, Dolly, and Ted fell on the three others, and sprang to their feet instantly, badly shaken and frightened, but otherwise quite unharmed. Bess emerged with a bleeding lip, for she had fallen on her doll, and the pretty flaxen-haired Rosabel had been broken in the accident, and had wounded her little mother, though the cut lip was nothing

to the anguish of looking on Rosabel's crushed face.

Ethel's dress was torn, but she herself was quite sound. Lily had fallen under all the others, and now did not rise when the removal of their weight left her free to do so.

"Are you hurt, Lily?" cried Dolly anxiously. Ethel stooped over her sister and tried to pull her up, but Lily moaned, and shook off Ethel's hand.

"What's the matter?" asked Ted, who privately considered little Lily the most charming of the three little girls next door.

"My ankle hurts dreadfully," sighed Lily. "I can't get up. You'll have to go call somebody."

"No, we won't," said Tony. "We'll help you. Ted and Ethel can make a chair—you know how, Ted? If you don't they'll show you. Stop crying, Bess, and help Lily. What's the difference if your doll's head did crack? She's just a doll. Bess and I'll lift you up, Lil, and put you on the chair. Just

see what a nice one Ethel and Ted've made!"

But Lily cried on, and refused to lift her eyes. Bess bent over her. "Is your Baby Blossom broken, too, Lily?" she asked, in the voice of one who is tasting bereavement at its bitterest.

"No," sobbed Lily. "I held her up, and kept the hit off her with my arms."

"Then you needn't cry," said Bess. "Let them take you home."

Lily turned slightly. "Take the baby, then, and don't hurt my ankle—it's all awful now," she said.

Bess and Dolly and Tony lifted her very gently and set her on the chair Ted and Ethel had made ready by clasping each other's wrists. Poor little Lily was very white, and the children made up their minds on the spot that her ankle was broken.

So it was a very dismal procession that wended its way back to the house, the three who were not wounded or part of the chair, supporting Lily at the back, Bess giving

vent to a tearing sob at intervals as she looked down on Rosabel lying, past all hope, in her arms.

"I'm glad we got the paper settled before it happened," said Tony. "And, say, Lily, isn't it nice? Aren't you proud? The very first piece of news we've got to put in The Sun and Moon is the dreadful accident to Miss Lillian Howell! It's going to be just like a real paper, and you're beginning it."

But Lily did not seem to be able to rise to this generous view of herself as an interesting news item. Her pretty head drooped, and her tears fell quietly, as she rode along, an arm around Ted's and Ethel's neck, and the poor little ankle quivering with pain.

CHAPTER X

THE SUBSCRIPTION LIST

THE children were not right in their opinion of Lily's ankle. It was not broken, but the injury proved to be a bad strain, and might take longer to get well, the doctor said, than if the soft little bones had been broken.

"You can't go with us to get suscribers," said Dolly, pronouncing the word just as her twin did, of course.

"I think I'm glad of it," said Lily from the depths of her armchair, whence she regarded the world at large without the slightest desire to make a "house-to-house canvass" for subscribers to The Sun and Moon.

"I don't like to go either," confessed Dolly, "but it's mean not to when Ted must,

and I'm one of the editors. I thought I'd say I'd stay with you, but I knew 'twas trying to get out of things."

"I know a secret," said Lily, less interested in the paper than she might be. "My aunty sent to the city for a new doll, just the same's Rosabel, for Bess. She sent Rosabel's body—don't you tell."

"Oh, I'm glad of that!" cried Dolly. "Bess feels so bad she can't forget it. I hope it'll get here right off, so's she can help us better."

"It'll come to-morrow. Aunt Bessie told me, 'cause I sprained my ankle," said Lily.

"Dolly, Dolly, come along," called Tony. "They're all waiting for you at the gate. They sent me back to say they couldn't wait 'nother minute; they'll start if you don't hurry."

"All right, I'll come now," said Dolly, rising with a sigh that alone should express how gladly she would be left behind. "Good-by, Lily; we'll play with you this afternoon —house—I'll bring my dolls."

There was a difference of opinion as to where the canvassers for the paper should go first. Ted advocated the law as most important to a paper's standing, the law being represented by Squire White, who served as judge in county court. But Dolly wished to go first to Doctor Corbin, not only because the doctor struck her as the greatest man in town, but because she loved him dearly; and Tony—whom you never would have suspected of thinking first of the church—was strongly for securing the Methodist minister as the first subscriber, because, he said, his name would look well at the head of the list. Decidedly Tony was wise in his generation, for as soon as he said this the others saw the force of his reasoning—and there was no other minister in Methley. Of course, no outsider could really be the very first subscriber, because the twins had twenty-five cents from Aunt Anna for her subscription, and Mrs. Rowley had promptly handed over her first year's subscription to Tony and Bess, but this was so evident that it

was not necessary to put their names down.

So the five agents for The Sun and Moon pushed open the Reverend Mr. Amos Allen's gate and rang his bell with their knees shaking like the bell wire—for even Tony wilted a good deal under the actual ordeal.

They were shown into the study, and Mr. Allen looked up from the foolscap on which he was neatly copying his last Sunday's sermon, with a view to having it included in the volume of sermons he meant to publish.

"Well, my little friends," he said in a voice plainly labeled "kindly." "Well, and what can I do for you?"

The children nudged one another, waiting for some one to begin, with the result that no one began. "I think you are not my Sunday-school children, are you?" said Mr. Allen, hoping to set their tongues free.

"No, sir; we don't go to Sunday-school here," said Ted faintly, for he felt this was a bad beginning. "Aunt Anna teaches us things—Sunday-school things—on Sundays,

and we go at home." He hoped the minister would not think them heathens.

"Did you come to ask admission to our Sunday-school, my dears?" asked Mr. Allen.

"We are going to publish a paper—it will be the only paper in Methley, and we're going to write it and print it ourselves, and it is named The Sun and Moon; we came to see if you want to take it. It costs twenty-five cents a year; comes out every week," said Tony, plucking up heart.

"I have no doubt I shall enjoy it," said the minister, and he smiled, though he did not look amused. "I will subscribe for it. Did your parents send you here?"

"No," said Dolly eagerly, for she instinctively felt that Mr. Allen thought they were queer people if they had sent them. "Our papa and mama are in New York, and Aunt Anna didn't know just what we were going to do, 'cause she was so busy this morning we couldn't 'splain much; she knew we wanted to go out about the paper, and she said we might, but that's all."

"Very well, my children; I will give you twenty-five cents, and you will send me your paper when it appears. I hope you will use the money very wisely," said Mr. Allen, taking a bright quarter out of a little leather change purse that gathered up like a tobacco pouch.

"Thank you, sir," said the children in chorus. They felt like beggars—a feeling they had not foreseen, for they meant to give their subscribers the full value of their money, and believed that they could do so.

"He was all right," said Ted at last. They had walked along in silence for a short distance after leaving the house till the air and sunshine had scattered the oppression of their spirits. "He was very nice, but he doesn't know how to talk limber—he's all stiff, like as if he was in meeting. We'll put some jokes in The Sun and Moon just for him —to make him laugh higher up on his face than he does."

"Here's the doctor," cried Dolly joy-

ously. "We'll stop him and tell him about the paper here."

"Whoa, Noll!" said the doctor, reining in his horse, who was ready and used to stop anywhere. "I can't take you all in when I've got only my buggy, with one seat! You ought to know better than expect it," he cried, leaning out.

Ethel began to bridle, not being used to the doctor's ways, but Ted and Dolly laughed up into the kind face.

"We were going to see you, Doctor Corbin," said Dolly eagerly—suddenly the paper had got back into its own place and aspect as the nicest thing, something that any one would be glad to hear of. "We're going to have a paper—Ted thought of it——"

"Dolly and I are going to write it, and we're all going to print it—by hand, you know—and she wanted it called The Sun and Moon, not just The Sun, 'cause she thought it wasn't fair," cried Ted.

"And we're out getting subscribers," added Tony.

"Put me down for three copies," said the doctor. "Why, it will be great! I'm tremendously interested, and Methley has no paper. Here, how much is it?" And the doctor began fumbling in his great, baggy pockets for change.

"Twenty-five cents a year, but there's no use in suscribing for more'n one copy, 'cause we'd die if we had to print a lot of 'em, so we're only going to print one copy, and let it go 'round," explained Dolly.

"To be sure; just as well—better, in fact. Here's twenty-five cents, then, and I call that cheap for what I know I'll get. Now, get in, and I'll take you where you're going, or where I'm going, and I don't believe it would make a bit of difference which it was," said the doctor. "I don't think much of five children that can't pile in on a buggy floor and one seat! Dolly comes between my knees—hurry up, Dolly T.! Ted and Tony sit on the floor, back to back—like the Virginia reel—with legs hanging over, and if these two little girls can't squeeze into one seat

they're far wider than they look. Get in, my five scamps, or I'll get out and vaccinate you all on the spot."

The children scrambled in, laughing and crowding, the Rowleys and Ethel suddenly discovering, what Ted and Dolly had known all along, that their friend, the doctor, was a real child's man.

Doctor Corbin set them down, quite breathless over his jokes, in front of Squire White's place, and the children grew sedate again by the time they had traversed the long walk, and rapped with the old-time knocker on the door with its brass knobs and fan transom. Squire White's grave housekeeper let them in—she was really more alarming than the squire himself; she was so thin, to begin with, that she always reminded Ted of the bones of the long antediluvian creatures in the museum, those things that always have "saur" for the last syllable of their name, and whose other syllables may be anything—that you can't pronounce.

"Yes, you can see the squire," said Mrs.

Mellen, when the children put the question, inwardly wondering what could have brought five such small, rosy clients to the famous man of Methley. Then she showed them into the dark parlor, with the sifted light dimly betraying its awfulness, and left them.

The squire came in immediately. He was tall and thin, too, and the children felt transparent to their backbones under his glasses—he wore glasses, so they concluded him old, but he was not much past middle life.

Once more Ted and Tony in duet told the story of their plan. Something like a gleam of fun shot through the glasses, but before the surprised children could feel sure they had seen it, it was gone.

"Certainly, I will subscribe for The Sun and Moon," said Squire White gravely. "I intend always to support anything for the good of the town, and we need a newspaper. Please put me on your list. Here is a quarter of a dollar. I think you said that is

your subscription rate? Will you kindly give me a receipt for that sum? Which is your treasurer, who signs checks and receipts?"

The children looked blankly from one to another; they had not expected such formidable measures, and they doubted the squire's seriousness. But not a trace of a smile could they discover on the long, sharp face.

"I guess Tony had better do that," said Ted. "Dolly and I are editors and writers, and Tony's the one for those things."

"He looks more like it than you do," said the squire, glancing from Ted's sensitive little face to Tony's strong, keen one. "But I am shocked that you have not arranged for such an important matter as the finances of your paper. Come, then, sir; draw up to that table, and write me a receipt for twenty-five cents for one year's subscription to The Sun and Moon."

Tony drew up as he was bidden, but once at the table he sat helplessly sucking

the end of the pen which Squire White handed him.

"I don't know how," Tony said at last.

"Don't know how! A publisher, and can not write a receipt! Well, I am surprised! However, you know what you want to say, and the best rule under those circumstances is to say it as clearly as you can. I can not dictate my own receipt," said Squire White.

For the life of him, Tony could not see why the squire might not give him a hint, at least, but he dared not ask it, and so wrote: "We say in this we got a quarter from Squire White for the sun and moon a year and we promise to send him the paper for this till it runs out."

"What shall I sign it, sir?" he asked, as he blotted the great drop of ink which his too full pen had shed on the paper.

"My conscience, sir, do I know your name? Sign it, whatever it may be, and add: 'For the publishers.' I can't have you suing me for my subscription, in case the

publishers won't stand by your receipt," said the squire, so sternly that the children felt quite sure that this time he was in earnest.

"We shall stand by whatever Tony does," said Ted quickly. "And we wouldn't ask you for your suscription over again, not if you didn't have any receipt."

"That's right; be perfectly honest, and don't publish news that may not be true on another day if not on the one on which you say it's so," said the squire, and this time Ted felt sure he let his eyes twinkle, as if to console the editor for having his honesty questioned.

Tony signed his name, Frederick Rowley, in his best style, but he had some doubts of the form of the receipt. The squire took it and buttoned it inside his coat.

"Thank you. I shall be glad to receive my first number. Have you many subscribers so far?" he said, as he showed the children to the door with as perfect politeness as if they had been grown-up guests.

"Aunty and Tony's mother, and the doctor, and Mr. Allen and you—that's five, but we shall have more, we think," said Dolly. "We're going to get all we can, and then we shall make our first paper."

"Yes, ma'am," said the squire. "I am very much obliged to you for giving me an early chance to subscribe. And I have heard a great deal of the hustling newspaper women of New York, so that I am glad of the opportunity to see one."

This time all the children were perfectly sure that the squire was jesting, and ventured to look fully into his eyes. They were brimming with laughter, and the five proprietors of the yet unrisen Sun and Moon burst out laughing too. It was not likely that any one could mistake little Dolly—quiet, gentle, quaint little Dolly—for a hustling anything, much less a grown woman. So the five departed in good spirits from Squire White's.

The morning expedition was most successful; no one said them nay. Even Miss

Tabitha Brown, whom most of Methley considered crazy, but whom the children admired because she filled her house with the lost and maimed among the Methley dogs and cats—even Miss Tabitha gave them her name and urged them to devote a corner to Our Dumb Friends, which the editors were more than willing to do.

The five canvassers started for home with three dollars and seventy-five cents burning holes in their pockets, and searing Ted's conscience with fears of the paper not being worth so much money. But Tony was triumphantly delighted; fifteen subscribers! That was worth while! The only drawback to it was that they would have to print two copies to get The Sun and Moon around to them all in time.

As they hastened along toward home under the hot noontide sun, the children saw ahead of them a familiar stooping figure, with a basket on its arm, and ran to overtake Seth.

"Seth, Seth!" they cried. "Stop and

listen. We're going to have a paper, and we've been getting people to take it. We've got fifteen—twenty-five cents each a year. And we're going to have a corner for animals —Miss Tabitha asked us to!"

Seth smiled down on them affectionately. "That sounds pleasant, little folk," he said. Something in his voice, a tired note, and something in the gentle patience of his smile smote Dolly's heart with a pang she was too little to understand.

"We're going to make you an hon-hon-orable suscriber!" she cried, taking Seth's hand, and cuddling close to him as she had a way of doing.

"Yes, you shall see the paper first of anybody when it comes out," said Ted. "And I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll print an advertisement for you of your herbs and things, and put it in free—just for nothing, you know."

"Thank you very much," said Seth, sincerely, appreciating the fact that Ted was doing all he could to further his interests.

"That's nothing; you do lots for us," said Ted, in a manly tone.

"Besides, you know we love you more'n any one outside our very selves—mama and papa and aunty," said Dolly, with a caress of the hand she held. And then they parted.

CHAPTER XI

THE SUN AND MOON'S RISING

"IF we do it in ink it'll be mussy," said Dolly. Her tone was final with conviction, not to say despair; her elbows rested on the table, and before her lay several pencils, two penholders and paper, and a bottle of ink and a dictionary stood obediently waiting to serve her. Ted, at the table also, was ready to begin editorial labors; Bess and Ethel were busy cutting large sheets of white paper into the size upon which they had agreed for The Sun and Moon; and Lily, still weak in the ankle, but better, was watching her companions with unfeigned admiration.

"You see," said Dolly, "it's this way: we might get one page all right in ink, but a whole paper, and printing, and trying to

keep the letters plain, and get 'em all in, we'd be sure to begin to blot just's soon as we got tired—and we'll be tired doing it twice! Tired enough! 'Sides, we couldn't rub out, and the pages'd be as mussy! I say pencils."

"And if we use pencils it'll get all rubbed before the last one's seen it," said Ted. "But maybe it's better. Only I think we ought to put the name in ink, and the date and place, and such things."

"Ethel has to do that; she can draw. Come over here, Ethel, and make that picture you made on the boards that day in the native hut, when we tumbled through—the picture you were going to have at the top of The Sun and Moon," said Dolly.

Ethel came, dipped her pen into the ink, and drew two long lines all across the page, then two up and down at the ends of these, and in the space thus enclosed made once more the radiant sun and the smiling moon which she had drawn on the white pine floor of the boys' "native hut."

The editorial office of The Sun and Moon.

"Tony can print better'n me," she said, laying down the pen—right on the newly headed page!

"Now, Ethel, just see what you've done!" cried Dolly, ready to cry. And Ted added: "That's just like you, Ethel; you can't remember one minute. Now you've got to do it over on another sheet."

"Well, it's worse for me," said Ethel, impatient with herself and all the others. But she went to work over again, and this time, when she laid the pen down, there was no great blot below the heading, for the pen was deposited so near the edge of the table that it rolled off altogether, and shed its one remaining inky tear on little white Billy's very long tail. The cats had come up to oversee the issuing of The Sun and Moon, as became such wise animals.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Dolly. "We can't blot Billy, but I guess it'll wear off. Now, what do we put first, Ted?"

"News on the front page," said Ted promptly. "Methley news first, and the

most important first of that. And the worst thing we know of now is Lily's getting hurt. We'll write first and then copy." So with his tongue slightly extended—like Pukka Boy's when he was happy—Ted began to record the accident in the "native hut."

"When Mr. Rowley and Miss Rowley, and Miss Ethel Howell, and Miss Lily Howell and Miss Dorothea Tarleton and Mr. Theodore Tarleton were gathered in the native hut made in a tree by some tribes which lived here once the floor broke recently, and let them all through, but Some of them fell on top of others, and they were not hurt, but Miss Rowley's daughter, Rosabel, which she held in her arms was broke so bad she was killed, and Miss Lillian Howell was in the bottom row and she sprained her ankle and was laid up a While, but is now some better, it pains us to say all this, but it is true."

"That's fearfully—dreadfully long, Ted," said Dolly, beginning to copy, having looked up all the words they were uncertain how to spell.

"That's good," said Tony, "for we don't know any more news. What shall we put on the first page, 'sides that?"

"Things about people," said Ted promptly. "Here's one: 'We noticed when we drove down town that the streets were dusty for the horses it would be well to water them.'"

"What's that got to do with people?" cried Bess from her post, still cutting industriously.

"It's got a lot to do with the people driving," said Ted. "And here's another: 'Mr. Peter Hooper's daughter Jennie we hear has a fine yellow puppy.'"

"That's a good one. And here's another: 'Mr. and Mrs. Tarleton are expected to come to Methley in August,'" added Tony, supplying an item which he thought the twins' modesty would not suggest.

"That's enough," cried Dolly, who had been printing away for dear life. "That fills the page."

"You ought to make letters closer," said Tony.

"I can't, and have 'em so they can be read," said Dolly, opening and shutting her fingers several times. "Ow! It makes my hand ache to hold the pencil so hard!"

"Hold it looser then," suggested Ted. "I'll print now, Dolly, 'cause the story comes next, and that you have to write."

"No, first the poetry, in the left-hand corner," said Dolly, who had come prepared. "Here's some I made up last night after I went to bed. It's called Slowly and Surely; or, The Best Way, and this is it:

"Slowly and surely the bird builds her nest,
Slowly and surely of all ways is best.
Things that are hurried are never well done;
People stumble if too fast they run.
Step by step the little ones walk;
Word by word they learn to talk;
Under the sea where the coral is made
Slowly and surely the reefs are laid."

A murmur of admiration followed Dolly's reading of this original poem, while

the author tried to look modest, and Ted beamed on his friends, not at all trying to look modest, for he was immensely proud of Dolly's genius, as he firmly believed it to be.

"I don't see—I do not see, Dolly, how you can think of such be-au-ti-ful things!" said Bess. And Lily sighed as she added: "If I could write poetry like that I don't see how I could ever bear to do one other thing. Does it feel nice coming?"

"It's kind of exciting," admitted Dolly. "I couldn't go to sleep for ever so long last night doing that; I had to get up and write it in the cover of my dolls' ribbon-box, for fear I'd forget it."

"Put that in, Ted," said Tony briskly, "and put Dolly's name to it. Now, are you going to write the story too?"

"If I must," sighed Dolly, but really she was glad to do it. With the speed born of the fact that Ted was to copy what she wrote, Dolly scribbled the following brief tale:

"THE ADVENTURES OF KENNIBRIDGE

"They called him Kennibridge because he was a fairy that looked like a kitten and he lived on the bridge, but I don't know why it was Kenni too. He was a good fairy, and all his life he had been born to do no work, but another, stronger fairy magicked him, and he had to work for his living keeping the giant mice from gnawing up the bridge. And he was nearly dead doing what he wasn't used to, when one day he caught a weeping mouse, and he was a kind fairy, so he was sorry for the mouse, and he said: 'Don't cry, little mouse, or else tell me why and you won't have to.' And the mouse said he cried because he thought his mother would hate to have him caught. And Kennibridge said: 'I had a mother who brought me up to do no work, being a queen mother, and for her sake I will let you go.' And the mouse was glad, and he told Kennibridge a secret word which all mice were afraid of, and if Kennibridge said it in the middle of

the bridge they would all leave it forever. So he thanked the mouse and it ran off, and Kennibridge said the word—hollered it—in the middle of the bridge, and all the mice left it, and he never had to work again."

This story was received with as much admiration as had greeted the poem, and Ted copied it into The Sun and Moon. "That's as much as we can put in, except the advertisements," he announced. "We'll advertise some of our friends free—if they get an advertisement for nothing they can't think the suscription is dear." Which remark betrayed that Ted's first doubt still lurked about him.

"Seth's first!" cried Dolly, and she and Ted put their heads together to make it as good as possible. The result of their combined efforts was soon attained.

"Mr. Seth Atterbury gets herbs and makes them into S. Scents." [The children mistook the word essences for one of the kind of words found on bottles in drug stores, preceded by an initial letter.] "He

keeps herbs and dried flowers and S. Scents which are the best in the world, and he knows everything about woods and animals, if you have the wildest cat or dog he will make it love him. We hope everybody in the world will buy of him, for he is so dear and good, and needs to sell. Address this paper because he is almost always in the woods."

"That's nice," said Ethel approvingly. "I guess Seth'll get rich after that, for everybody in Methley'll see it."

"Now the doctor!" cried Lily, clapping her hands; since her accident she had grown as fond of the doctor as the twins were.

"I'll write that quick," said Ted, and wrote: "'Doctor Corbin can cure whatever ails you. Hardly any of his patients die eccept the old ones. If you have any sickness send for him because he is the best the people that have him don't look the same before and after.' You see," said Ted, looking up, "if I had two pictures of before and

after taking his medicines, I could put them in, but I haven't, so I just say it."

"That's all right," said Tony. "Anybody could understand it. Who's next?"

"I think we ought to put in the squire; he takes the paper, and he's one of the greatest people in Methley," said Dolly.

"That'll be harder to write," said Ted. "You help, Twin Doll."

So the twins again united their wits, and produced the following: "'If you are in trouble get Squire White to fix you up he is a lawyer that does anything for his—' What do you call the people that have lawyers? Are they patients, like a doctor's?" asked the editor-in-chief, pausing with his freshly wetted pencil on his lip.

"No; they're not patients. I don't know what they are, but they're not patients," said Ethel, and Tony and Dolly and Bess agreed in the opinion, as they shared the ignorance of the right term.

"Well, we'll call them just sufferers, because they wouldn't go to law if they did not

suffer," said Ted, bending to write again. "'A lawyer that does anything for his sufferers. Lost money found and stolen things given back. He is sure to win always because he is the judge too.'"

"It seems mean to leave the minister out," remarked Tony, feeling, perhaps, that Mr. Allen was his *protégé*, since it was he who had insisted on going to him first. "We didn't like him like these ones, but I guess he did his best."

"That's so," agreed Dolly. "But what can you advertise a minister for?"

"Nothing, but weddings and funerals, and preaching," said Ted gloomily. "But I guess we can do it. You'd better all help this out."

So the entire company, assisting with suggestions, composed the following notice:

"Mr. Allen is the Methodist minister and the only one of any kind in Methley so if you want good sermons you must go to him he marries everybody the best it can be done

and if you want a very nice funeral call to him."

"That's all there's room to put in," announced Ted and Dolly, holding up the paper, which was made up of four pages, printed very nicely on its first page, but getting queer and straggling in its letters on the last two.

"We promised Miss Tabitha a corner for animals!" cried Dolly, horrified at having forgotten a pledge to a subscriber.

"Oh, dear; then we've got to take another sheet of paper, and only look what a job it is to copy— Say, we'll have to make this a monthly, maybe!" said Ted, looking around shamefacedly at his associates.

"No, we won't; we said weekly, and we've got to have it," cried Spartan Dolly.

"What'll we put in the animal part?" asked Ethel.

"This one time I'll tell you what we'll do," cried Tony, with an inspiration. "We'll pin in the extra sheet, and say in it that next

week the animal corner is to be here, but we had so much to do we couldn't begin it in the first number. And by next week maybe we'll think of something."

"Yes, but I know what's better'n that!" cried Dolly eagerly. "We'll just leave our page, and say what you say, but we'll paste on it a lovely verse I've got—no, we'll copy it, 'cause I've got to keep it. It's about not going away in the summer and turning your pets out into the street—it's awful nice! And we'll say: 'Copied from another paper,' or something like that."

"That'll do, Dolly," said her twin with an air of relief. "Then we're done, only copying this all over—phew!"

"I didn't s'pose it would be so much bother," said Ethel, but Bess said cheerfully:

"The twins don't mind 'cause they're so bright—they'll be famouser than Charles Dickens some day."

"Oh, I don't know," said Ted modestly. "Well, it looks nice, don't it?" And he

turned the new paper every way to survey it in all possible lights.

"That's the very first number of The Sun and Moon. If it got to be a big paper, and came out every day, we'd be int'rested some time to see this number, Teddy. Let's be sure to keep one for us, if we have to make three of this one," said Dolly, full of confidence in the future.

"Well, I don't know," said Ted again, shaking his aching wrist. "I'd like to have it, all right, but I guess maybe we can get one of these two back when all the suscribers have read it."

CHAPTER XII

REAL GLORY

THE second copy of The Sun and Moon was made, and the editors, on whom fell all the responsibility of the office, were going to deliver the new paper.

It had been read in the homes of the publishers first, because that did not count, but of outside subscribers Seth was promised the first reading of one copy, and it was difficult to decide who was to have the other copy first. Dolly and Lily were anxious it should be the doctor, Ted and Ethel inclined to the squire, while Tony loyally supported the minister's claim, and Bess upheld Tony's opinion. So there was nothing to do but draw lots, and the squire won.

"You take it to him," said Ted. "Dolly

and I are going to Seth's, and it's fair for you to do some of the carrying."

"We're willing to," said Tony. "But I'd rather go anywhere than the squire's, 'nless he gets his parlor papered brighter, and isn't so cranky."

"My goodness, don't go in!" said Ted. "Then you needn't care 'bout the paper, and you won't see him, 'tisn't likely, and most of all he's not cranky—that's his way of having fun."

"I'll go," said Bess unexpectedly—"Ethel and I. I don't think he's cranky either."

So Ted and Dolly parted from the others, and got their hats to go, for the first time, to find Seth in his own domain.

Seth lived quite away even from the thinly scattered houses which constituted Methley. This was as it should be, for the children had never entirely lost their first impression of Seth as some one set apart from common humanity. The house was a tiny one; it held but three rooms, and a

rambling shed-like addition at the rear. It had never been painted, and wind and weather had tinted it a soft gray that made it blend with its green background of trees like a lichen.

Four cats lay sunning themselves in its —well, not its front yard, because it had no yard fenced off from the woods adjoining, but in the little grass-grown cleared spot in front of it that would have been a yard for a common house.

Some one was moving about inside, and the twins rejoiced that they had found Seth at home, for the statement which they had made in The Sun and Moon that he was "almost always in the woods" was strictly true.

"Seth, Seth!" called Ted and Dolly in their usual duet, and Seth appeared in the doorway, smiling and very much surprised.

"We've brought you The Sun and Moon first, as we said we would," cried Ted, leaping on Seth, and twining his legs around him like an affectionate morning glory.

"And we've advertised you—such a nice one! Just look!" added Dolly, swinging on Seth's arm.

"Come in, dear Twinsies, as your aunt calls you," said Seth, leading the way. "As Dolly has come, and I have very few young ladies come to see me, I suppose I ought to take you into my sitting-room, but the kitchen is far nicer."

"Kitchens always are nicer," said Dolly, turning toward the sweet odors which indicated the room where some sort of work was going on.

"Mine especially, because I made it as big as I could, and my bedroom and sitting-room as small as possible," said Seth.

"Did you make this house?" asked Ted, looking around the kitchen with admiring eyes.

"Built it with my own hands," said Seth, and this surprised Ted and Dolly beyond words, for Ted had only meant to ask if it had been made especially for Seth, and never dreamed that he had built it.

"No wonder you could make Baby Bunting's house so nice!" said Ted.

"How is the rabbit orphan?" asked Seth.

"Getting as big as anything, and awfully nice," said Dolly. "He comes plump, plump after me—Ted too—when we let him out, and he's as tame! But isn't this the very best kitchen you ever saw, Teddy? What smells so nice, Seth?"

"All sorts of herbs drying, and three or four extracts I'm making at the same time. See there?" And Seth pointed to large jars in which dried leaves lay at the bottom under liquor, and to another with its mouth covered with a thick, soft grayish paper, through which a golden liquid dropped, one drop at a time.

"Come and see my garden," said Seth, going out through a rear door. It was a garden wholly unlike any the children had ever seen. Near the door grew flowers, and, though it was not late in July, they were laden with bloom. It looked as though Seth

could not lend them much space, and had coaxed them into giving him all that they possibly could in return for loving care and for ground that he could ill spare them. For, crowding up to the flowers, and filling the garden to its lower end, grew orderly herbs, marjoram, thyme, sage, savory, and any number of others, marshaled into rows, and faithfully stretching up toward the sun to furnish Seth with all the leaves he needed from them. So the air was fragrant with the strong herbs' odors, blowing over and mingling with the delicious mignonette, alyssum, sweet peas, and all the other old-fashioned flowers massed against the gray of the tiny house.

"What a nice garden!" cried Dolly, not knowing why it struck her as so peaceful, so set apart, so like a haunting poem.

"It is a nice garden," said Seth. "And it's a most useful garden. And it has the greatest quantity of ladybugs in it! They never 'fly away home,' unless this is their home, and I sometimes suspect they have

rented my garden—after all they pay rent, in one way or another."

"We'd like to have you look at the paper," hinted Ted, not that he loved gardens less, but that at this time he loved The Sun and Moon more than any other earthly interest.

"Well, I rather think I will!" exclaimed Seth, so heartily that Ted could not but be gratified. "Why, I am only keeping that till the last, because it is the best, and because I don't want to be disturbed while I am reading it. Come around to the front; I have made a seat there at the edge of the woods, where the shivery little birches begin, and there I'll read my paper while you see my cat family, and how pretty my grounds are—they stretch out into thicker woods for two miles, and I am as free as Prince Pipsissewa was before he was enchanted."

"We ought to leave the paper, don't you think so? No one who takes a paper reads it right through while the man bringing it

waits," said Ted doubtfully, though he did ache to see Seth's face as he read the fruit of their brains and labor.

"Oh, well; I think this is one of the cases which circumstances alter," said Seth seriously. "It isn't often that the editor delivers his own paper, but when he brings his first copy, with his own hands, to a personal friend, it seems to me natural for that friend to read it without losing a moment." Seth took the children around the house as he spoke, and they trotted beside him quite convinced that Seth was right about the paper, and glad to be thus convinced.

On the bench under the quivering birches Seth sat himself down to read The Sun and Moon, and the twins climbed up, one on each side of him, to look over his arms, and enjoy their own contributions from a fresh point of view—the pleasure of a new reader. Seth read with the most admirable gravity, until he got to the advertisements—his own, with the doctor's, lawyer's and—not "Indian chief," but the minister's. Then he

was taken with such a violent cough that Dolly was frightened; the paper shook in his hand more than the birch leaves above them were shaking. The choking grew so very severe that Seth made a gesture of apology, and went into the house, while the twins anxiously discussed how fast rapid consumption might be, and whether there was any chance of Seth's being carried off then and there.

But he came back quite restored, except for a twitching around his lips, and took his place between Ted and Dolly on the bench to finish his reading.

"It is really a very fine paper," said Seth at last. "I shall enjoy it greatly; count the days from week to week between its appearances."

"We want it to grow bigger, and publish it every day," said Ted, with an easy air of experience, suggesting nothing less than years spent on what is known as "Newspaper Row" in New York. "Do you think it can?"

"I think it may," said Seth, with the slightest possible emphasis on the *may*. "Nearly everything is possible. Of course it won't be at once, but as you get a great many subscribers, and grow big yourselves, and perhaps have a printing-press, why, you can decide then about The Sun and Moon."

"Well, there's no use talking, it's an awful job now," sighed Ted, unwinding his legs which he had twisted by putting one foot around the other ankle, after the legs were crossed. "You see, the Rowleys can't do much, and Dolly and I have to work like everything. Of course we're going to keep it up," he added hastily.

"Oh, yes," Dolly chimed in, getting down to pet Seth's cats. "They're lovely, Seth, but I couldn't love them like Billy and Pukka Boy, nor Lady Mew either, though she's not my favorite."

"You ought not to love them as well; the others are yours, and love you better than mine do," smiled Seth.

"We must get home," said Ted. "Are you coming soon?"

"Yes, indeed. And thank you very much for letting me see the paper first. I appreciate it, and I feel that The Sun and Moon will greatly brighten my life," said dear Seth, without the slightest suspicion that he was turning into a prophet.

"Good-by, then; I wish you'd walk part way," said Dolly, getting up from her knees.

"I would if I hadn't all my herbs brewing, like a witch," said Seth. "Another day! I mean to have a picnic—not more than seven people invited—can you guess who they are?"

"Us. Us and the Rowleys and Ethel and Lily!" cried the twins, jumping about so wildly that all four cats hastily withdrew underneath the steps, where they would be safer if these children who lost their senses so suddenly should never get them back again.

"Not a bad guess," said Seth, "though

not exactly a grammatical one. I am not sure when I shall have this party, but I am perfectly certain that I shall have it before the summer is over."

"Good-by, good-by, you dear, dearest, dearestestest Seth!" cried Dolly, walking away in a trance of rapture.

The twins burst into the house by the side door, and were running through to find their aunt in the library, when they heard the sound of a man's voice, and Aunt Anna's merry laugh as it ceased.

"She's got company," whispered Dolly, "and I'm 'most sure our hands and faces are not nice. We can't go in till we've washed 'em. Let's listen, and find out who it is."

"The little girls next door brought it," the guest was saying. "I was just going out, but I stopped to read it—it is not a large sheet, and didn't take long; I assure you it was well worth the time invested."

"It's the squire, and he's talking about The Sun and Moon," whispered Ted, while Dolly pinched him much harder than she had

intended in the excitement of making the same discovery at the same moment.

"The advertisements alone are well worth the subscription, multiplied by at least eight—perhaps not for the actual returns they will bring, but as monuments of sincerity," the squire continued, and the twins wondered how those advertisements could ever serve as monuments. "I have sent my copy on to the doctor—I told the little girls I would do so—but after they have circulated the paper among all their subscribers I want a copy to send to my brother in Denver. He is particularly fond of children, and studies them—he writes very charming child stories. So, if I may, I should like to mail him The Sun and Moon; he would enjoy it even more than I do."

Ted and Dolly pinched each other again to make sure that they were wide awake. Suddenly fame and glory were at their feet, yet crowning them. The Sun and Moon to be sent to Denver!—they didn't know where that was, but surely somewhere far away.

And sent to the squire's brother!—the squire's brother must be learned too. But if there were any doubt of this point Squire White had just said that he was a writer—wrote child stories—maybe published them, in print, books for aught any one could tell! Ted and Dolly fairly trembled. "Let's crawl through the hedge," said Ted, in a solemn whisper, not deeming it necessary to express his destination more plainly. "We ought not to let the others be without knowing it a minute—'tisn't fair!"

So without waiting to hear what Aunt Anna would reply to this great honor done her family—and her darlings—Ted and Dolly ran out of the house again, and crawled through the hedge in search of their neighbors and associate publishers.

The Rowleys and little Howell girls were just about to sit down to luncheon, but Mrs. Rowley excused them when she heard that the twins had something to tell them which could not wait a moment.

"Say, Tony," Ted began, trying to keep

his voice steady, and buttonholing Tony in a fashion copied after his father's manner to his friends, "say, Tony, Dolly and I came back from Seth's, you know, and the squire's at Aunt Anna's. We heard him talking, and say, what do you s'pose? He said The Sun and Moon was all right—I don't know what he said, just, but he said the advertisements were worth the price—more'n worth it. He said they could be put on monuments—I don't know what he meant, but that's what he said; something like that. But he wants a copy of the paper when everybody's read it to send to Denver to his brother, it's so good, and his brother's a writer—writes stories, he said. Say, what do you think?"

Tony gasped. "Gracious! You don't think he was making fun?—you know he's queer that way," he suggested.

"Fun! What, of Aunt Anna? Well, I guess not!" cried Ted. "He wasn't talking to us, you know. No, sir; he meant it, right down to the ground."

Dolly and Ethel and Lily were hugging one another, speechless with delight.

"Is Denver far?" asked Bess. "Is it in America?"

"Yes, it's far; I don't know where it is, but it's in America, 'cause mama's friend went there once, and it wasn't 'cross the ocean," said Dolly.

"And they'll read your story and your poem 'way off there!" exclaimed Ethel, deeply impressed. "Say, Dolly, doesn't that make you famous?"

"I guess it does," said Dolly, with the gravity so great a thought called forth. "It's kinder awful, isn't it? Ted, we've got to go home; Tony's lunch's ready, and ours must be, pretty near. We thought we ought to tell you right away 'bout the paper," she added, to her neighbors.

"Well, I should say so!" cried Ethel, and Tony added: "If he really does send the paper to Denver we ought to be pretty proud, but I think maybe he's fooling."

But the squire was in serious earnest, as

the children soon discovered. It did not take many days for all their fifteen subscribers to read The Sun and Moon, and just as soon as one copy was free for him to claim, the squire wrapped it carefully, and addressed it in his fine, detached hand to the brother who wrote child stories, far away in distant Denver. Then he dropped the little paper into Methley's post-office, in the corner of the grocery store, whence it speeded away to carry a message of which its sender and editors never dreamed.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SUN AND MOON'S SETTING

TED was mopping his brow, and crossing and uncrossing his legs with the fidgetiness of extreme physical discomfort. Dolly's blue dimity gown was round-necked and her sleeves short, yet her cheeks were flushed, her hair lay damp around her forehead, and her dimpled arms were mottled with the heat, for there had been several days when the thermometer had climbed away up, almost out of the nineties, and had stayed there, like a cat in a tree with a dog below barking at it, and Methley was suffering.

In all this dreadful weather the twins and Bess were laboring on The Sun and Moon, resolved to get out its second issue at all costs. Tony had gone swimming in the

river with bigger boys, Ethel refused flatly to have anything to do with the paper until it was cooler, Lily was ailing, so the twins and Bess alone stood to their post like scorching little Casabiancas, struggling to fulfil their obligations to their subscribers.

"I can't—I can not think of a single thing to write a story about," said Dolly, disconsolately. "I've written down Once Upon a Time, and some other things like that, the way stories begin, but it doesn't do one speck of good. Do you s'pose it would be very awful not to have a story this week—just write something in the story corner saying we hadn't a story, or something like that?"

"I shouldn't think any one'd care if they didn't have to read one when it's so hot," said Bess, with a foretaste of older people's weariness of the making of many books.

"Do you think—would it be any harm—how'd it do?" stammered Ted, and then stopped short.

"What's the matter, Teddy?" asked Dolly. "What are you trying to say?"

"How'd it do not to have any paper at all this week?" said Ted, getting redder as he spoke, but blurting out his suggestion at last. "I've been thinking maybe we'd better have The Sun and Moon a monthly, any way through the hot weather."

"Why, this is July, and if we had it a monthly just for the summer, we'd only get one month's rest," said Bess, betraying how pleasant she felt a longer rest would be.

"All the time, then," said Ted, glad some one else had said more than he had.

"I'd like it," said Bess decidedly. "And Tony and Ethel said they'd a good mind not to do any more work at all on the paper. Tony said he'd 'bout made up his mind it wasn't any fun. And if we've got to do it by ourselves, once a month's all we can stand."

"We couldn't give it up—could we?" Dolly had begun to speak decidedly, but she ended with a hopeful note in her voice, for

she was so tired and warm that the prospect of being the mainstay of a paper every week of her life looked dreary indeed.

"Not give it up, D.; only make it a monthly," said Ted. "And begin right now, 'cause it's so awful hot." And he began gathering up pencils and paper with a liveliness of which he had not seemed capable five minutes before.

"Such good news for you, Twinsies!" called Aunt Anna's voice up the stairs, and Aunt Anna's face followed it, peeping smilingly through the door. "Seth has come, and he wants to take you and the children next door to a cool spot in the woods to lunch and spend a few hours. I'm having Bevis harnessed to get you there—it's too warm to walk—and Mrs. Rowley and I are having a lunch put up. If you don't care to go I can tell Fritz to unharness, so don't hesitate to say so."

"Oh, my goodness!" exclaimed Dolly, hurling herself at her laughing aunt, quite beyond further expression, and Ted dropped

all the pencils and paper he had so carefully gathered up and stood on his head, in which position he painfully remarked that he "guessed there wasn't much danger of not wanting to go."

"Tony'll feel dreadfully if we go and he doesn't," remarked Bess.

"Seth said he would go around by the swimming-hole, and pick Tony up," said Aunt Anna. "Come now, and get ready, and Bess will run over and see her mother a moment, and be ready to start with Ethel and Lily—Lily is to go; she is well enough for that."

Bess flew off in a rapture while Ted and Dolly ran to be made fit for such a great joy as Seth's party. When they came down stairs old Bevis was standing at the side door, whisking his tail and looking around to see that Aunt Anna stowed away the baskets properly in the big carriage, and Trusty was stretching and whining, feeling pretty sure that he was included in Seth's invitation, but wishing some one would hurry up

and say so, and set his mind entirely at rest. Seth was to drive, and not only the children's luncheon, but Bevis's dinner was stowed away under the seats, as well as his fly covering. Ted and Dolly clambered on the front seat beside Seth, and when they stopped at the house next door Lily was squeezed in with them, and Ethel and Bess climbed into the back seat, planning for Tony to join them. Trusty knew now that he was all right, for he had been strongly urged to be one of the party, though the merest invitation was all he had asked. He now sat wagging his tail violently, his red tongue lolling over his black lip, for it was warm enough to make him pant even in the few feet between the two houses, but Trusty was a person who did not mind discomfort of the body, provided his mind was at rest—and he loved to run before, and behind, and at all sides of Bevis.

Methley roads were shady, and Bevis jogged along just fast enough to give his freight a little breeze; it was most pleasant

creaking slowly under the arching limbs of the trees, and pale little Lily began to revive under the joy of it all.

The party met the big boys coming up with Tony from the swimming-hole, and Tony gave a wild whoop when he heard the good news that he was to be taken on a sort of picnic; he wasted no time on his older companions, but jumped in beside his sister and cousin as frisky as the tadpoles he had just been among. Then Bevis swung along again, and turned into a narrow woods road, marked heavily with the wagon wheels of the ice cutters who had passed that way in March, and thickly shaded by the big trees, and made fragrant with sweet fern, and cool with bracken.

This road widened into a mossy glade, and here Seth reined up Bevis and announced the end of the journey. Bevis was made comfortable under a tree, his bridle slipped and his oats given him, and the others, including Trusty, turned a little

farther into the opening, and waited to find out what was to come next.

"What shall we do first?" asked Seth, but he said it with a smile, as if he already knew the answer.

"Eat our lunch," said all the children without a moment's hesitation, though it was not yet lunch-time.

Seth laughed his quiet laugh, but obediently began to open the baskets which had been set in a row, and did give out odors that made waiting to see their contents pretty hard. They took out bread and butter, cold meat, pies, cakes, lemonade, milk, a bottle of cold coffee for Seth, doughnuts, even a box of candy—the children shouted as they discovered these things, and Trusty barked frantically.

"Bread and butter and meat first," said Seth firmly as Tony reached for a fat doughnut. "The one who eats most of these things can have all he wants of sweets, and the others must be satisfied with only all that they can eat of them."

Dolly and Ted made their funny little wriggle of delight as Seth said this. They always wriggled when they were pleased, and fully appreciated Seth's quiet nonsense.

For a while conversation languished while young teeth, as sharp as squirrels', made half moons, that immediately set, out of big slices of bread and butter, and when they had done their duty in that direction fell with new energy on the sweet things.

The luncheon looked, when they sat down, like a provision for a crowd; in a few moments the mossy rock-table looked like Mother Hubbard's cupboard—only that Trusty was licking his chops in a way that indicated that something more than a bone had been found.

"Now we must play fair, and all help wash the dishes in the spring—I'll show you the spring," said Seth. "And after we've played fair we'll try to play fairly—fairly well, you know. And we must take the pail and bring Bevis a long drink of cool water."

"Let me give it to him," begged Ted. "He knows me, and I love to."

So the procession to the spring formed, and the dishes were soon washed—Aunt Anna had seen to it that there were but few, for she knew little fingers had no objection to play the part they had played when Cain and Abel went picnicking, and to take the place of forks. Bevis had his drink, which Ted gave him, patting his neck and pulling his forelock while the good old horse sucked up the spring water in delighted long breaths, and then blew bubbles as he cooled his nose in what was left.

"What'll we play?" asked Ethel, when, duties done and the dishes put back in the baskets, the children gathered around Seth on the moss, ready to be entertained.

"First of all let's play something that is a sitting-down play, because it is so warm, and we've had so very much luncheon," said Seth. "Suppose we play that there's a fairy right above our heads, sitting on the lower branch of this tree, and this fairy will grant

our wishes—just one wish to each of us. Let's all think hard, and make a wish for what we want most—aloud, you know—and if we are the sort of folk fairy folk love she will give us what we want, but if we're not, we shall not get our wish. We must think hard, remember, and say slowly and clearly: 'What I wish for most is'—and then we each say what it is. Do you think that would be a nice game?"

"Very nice," said Dolly soberly. "But, could it be true, Seth? Might we get our wishes? There couldn't be a fairy." Dolly's voice was wistful, as though she longed to be told the fairy was really there.

"S'h, Dolly," whispered Seth, laying his finger on his lip. "She might hear you, and be offended, then you, at least, would not get your wish. As to fairies, dearie, everything that we love and find beautiful is true in one way or another, and when you are old enough you will understand this, because you love beauty and are one that the fairies love. So make your wishes, children, only

be careful that they are your real wishes, and we shall know whom the fairies love most of us, for only those will have their wishes granted."

The little group looked solemn over this wonderful play; it hardly seemed like a play. Tony dug holes in the moss as he lay stretched out at full length at Seth's feet. Ethel threw acorn cups at Lily, who was collecting them for Tony to make a doll's tea-set of them—he said that he could do it. Ted lay flat on his back staring into the sky; Bess pleated her skirt into folds, considering hard, and Dolly leaned against Seth's shoulder, trying to curl the ends of his hair over her little finger.

"Who's first?" asked Tony. "I'm ready."

"You might be," said Seth, "you or Ethel, because you are the oldest. I must be last because I'm the biggest."

Only Ted and Dolly giggled a little at this reasoning, and Tony, nothing loath, sat up straight to announce his heart's desire.

"What I wish for most is a pony," he said, loud and clear. Then he lay down again, leaving it to the fairy to attend to it.

"Next. Ethel," said Seth.

"What I wish for most is to have a bicycle and learn to ride," said Ethel.

"Ted and Dolly, you're the same age; what shall we do about that?" asked Seth.

"Let Dolly and Lily tell; I don't want to," said Ted, blushing furiously.

"Oh, you must, if we all do," cried Dolly.

"We'll let Ted be the last, then he won't mind. What can you want that is so hard to say, Teddy?" said Seth.

Ted fidgeted, and looked so embarrassed that Dolly, obedient to Seth's signal, said: "What I wish for most is that mama would come soon."

"What I wish for most," said Lily, looking up into the tree to see if the fairy really were listening, "is a perfectly beautiful doll carriage and cradle for my Baby Blossom."

"Will you be next, Seth? I know you'll get yours, 'cause the fairies love you better'n

anybody in the world," whispered Dolly in his ear.

"I'll be next," said Seth, "but I'm afraid I shall never get my wish. Still, we must be perfectly truthful, so here goes: What I wish for most is never again to have to think of money. Now, Teddy, we've all told, but you. Do you mind wishing?"

"I hate to, but I s'pose 'tisn't fair not to," said Ted. "There's lots of things I'd like, but if we must be perfectly truthful—well! What I wish for most is to give up publishing The Sun and Moon." Ted's voice sank as he spoke, and his face was crimson. It seemed so mean to be the first to tire of the paper—after but one issue, too, and he the founder and the most enthusiastic of its staff! But he was tired, dead tired of the idea, and truth compelled him to say so.

A surprised silence greeted his wish, then a shout of pleasure from all but Dolly and Lily, the latter because she had nothing to do with the paper, as the others had, the former because she was shocked, yet ex-

cited by the sudden knowledge that she wished precisely what her twin did, but had not known it until that moment.

"Why, Teddy," said Seth, "if you want to give up The Sun and Moon you ought to do it. A great many people start in business, and then give it up. I am sure your subscribers will be ready to let you off."

"Well, if I'm not glad you feel that way, Ted!" cried Tony. "It's the biggest nuisance! And you can't keep it up, you and Dolly, to save your life. I don't see the fun of working in vacation."

"We're tired of it, Bess and I—we said so 'most right away," added Ethel. "Just drop it. Maybe you'll get a printing-press next Christmas, then there'd be some sense in having a paper, and we might do it next summer."

"Well, I must say," said Dolly slowly and reluctantly, "I didn't know I was so tired of it as I felt the minute Ted said that, but if we could give it up 'thout being too mean, I'd be awfully glad."

"Give it up, by all means," said Seth. "You see it's unanimous. We'll put up a stone here in the moss to mark the spot where The Sun and Moon died—set, I suppose we ought to say. Tony, find us a stone, will you? Ted, you help him."

Ted arose, a mingled expression of relief and shame on his face. "Well," he sighed, "if we can stop, I'm sure I'm glad enough."

"You see, there was a fairy," said Seth, "and she must love Teddy, because he got his wish the moment he uttered it."

Tony and Ted brought a stone—a smooth stone—and Seth wrote on it with a pencil: "On this spot set The Sun and Moon, having shone gloriously for one issue," and placed the stone upright in the moss, flanking it with many little stones to keep it from falling when the winter storms should come.

"Now, children, I'm sorry to say it, but there's a thunder-storm coming up from the west, and we must start homeward, or old Bevis won't be able to save us from a wetting. We couldn't have stayed much longer

in any case, and it's been pleasant, hasn't it?"

"Very," said Ethel discontentedly. "But I thought we could stay till supper-time."

"But you don't want to when it's going to thunder, do you?" cried Dolly, jumping to her feet quickly. "There, just hear that! Oh, hurry, Seth!" A distant rumble rolled up from the west, and nervous little Dolly had no desire to picnic in a thunder-storm.

"We shall get home, Dolly, if we start at once," said Seth. "Come, children. Tony, put the baskets in. Ted, help me with Bevis's bridle. Pile in, lassies; now, we're off. All ready, Trusty boy. Home, Bevis." Shaking the reins, Seth woke up dreamy Bevis, and the carriage bowled down the shady road more rapidly than it had come, for the thunder rolled more frequently, and the sky was growing dark, and Bevis said to himself that trotting was better than a wetting, when a horse was growing old, and might have rheumatism.

CHAPTER XIV

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

"MAY Tony and Bess and Ethel and Lily go down to the mail with us?" asked Ted, standing, hat in hand, on Mrs. Rowley's steps.

"Not Lily; it's too far for her to walk, but the other three may if they like," said Mrs. Rowley, and, as they did like, the five children were soon trudging down the dusty road, which seemed to have forgotten all about last night's showers.

"If we hadn't used that suscription money!" said Ted suddenly. "What'd you s'pose made us divvy up the very first thing?"

"Yes, 'cause we've been thinking, Ted and I," said Dolly. "If we give up the

paper we have to give that money back, 'cause it was for the paper, and so 'tisn't ours, and we haven't all of it, have we?"

"I haven't a cent of it; neither has Bess. I got her to put ours together and buy a little garden hose of our own, 'cause our man won't let us have his," said Tony promptly. "But I don't know what you mean."

"Why, I mean we owe all that money—all we haven't got to return—to the people that gave it to us for The Sun and Moon for a year—else we've got to keep up the paper. Don't you see?" cried Ted impatiently. "'Tisn't ours, 'cause they gave it to us to get something, and if we don't give 'em that thing, they've got to get their money back. 'Twould be stealing not to. Now, how much've we got to return?"

"I've kept mine," said Dolly. "I meant to buy a doll's trunk with it when we get home. We'll give that back."

"We haven't ours," repeated Tony.

"How much was it? I forget," said Ethel, and the twins felt sure she was not hopeful, if she did not even know how much she had had.

"We got three dollars and seventy-five cents for suscriptions," said Ted, in a melancholy but decided voice. "We spent five cents for ink, and ten cents for that big white wrapping paper to cut up in sheets, 'cause it was cheaper than writing paper, and three cents for pencils, and that makes eighteen cents. So we had sixty cents each, except me, and I said I'd take the seven cents, 'cause I didn't care, so now I'll keep the pencils to make it fair—we had three dollars and fifty-seven cents, after we bought the things for the paper. Now, what'll we do if we owe all that?"

"I haven't mine," said Ethel. "I don't know what I did with it, only buy candy at the store and a rubber ball. I shouldn't wonder if Lily had hers, 'cause I heard her say she guessed she'd keep it to send some little girl in the Philippines to school. She

heard somebody talking about something, and she's always like that. I s'pose she'd give you hers if she knew she ought to, but it's dreadfully hard to make Lily see anything but what she's got into her head."

"Well, there's mine certain sure, but will that do much? No, I know it can't," sighed Dolly.

"That would give two people back their money and ten cents over," said Bess. "Say, isn't this dreadful? I thought only horrid people couldn't pay what they owed."

"Of course it's dreadful; it's disgrace, that's what it is—I know, I've often heard papa talk," said Ted, with tragic earnestness. "But we've got to pay, that's all, some way. I've got fifty cents that I've had ever since I came here; mama gave it to me, and I'll put that in." He did not ask sacrifices of the other children, but he hoped they would offer to help. Bess was a comfort; she seemed to see things as the Tarletons did. "I've a quarter," she said. "I'll put that in."

"Well, I've a little money, but it's my own, and the paper wasn't much mine, so I guess I'll keep it," said Tony.

"I don't believe I'd like to pay my money to all those folks if I had any, but I haven't; I never have any money," said Ethel.

"Then we can give five suscribers their money back," said Ted, swallowing his feelings. "We'll have ten cents over after that. I guess we'd better give it first to Miss Tabitha, 'cause she looks poor, and those three funny old sisters, and Seth. Now, what'll we do 'bout the rest? The squire might do something to us—he's judge."

"Oh, he won't care; we might tell 'em all we'd give 'em the money when we got it, and they won't say anything to us, 'cause we're children," said Tony easily.

Ted stopped short with such a stamp of his foot in the dust that a cloud rose around the little group. "Tony Rowley," he said fiercely, "if we're big enough to get up a paper we're big enough to be honest, and if

you think I'll keep that money—why, I'd just's soon do anything, anything! I guess I won't have the Methley people say the Tarleton twins came begging, and didn't even say so! That money's got to be got! Dolly and I can't do that paper all alone, and so we've got to drop it, and I think it's pretty funny if you don't stand by us."

There was a tremor in Ted's voice that sounded not far from crying, and he winked hard as he resumed his way, kicking up a cloud of dust as he went.

"I'll stand by you," said Tony good-naturedly; he could not see what Ted and Dolly were so upset about. "I guess we can pay it back—maybe my father'n yours will when they come."

"Oh, we wouldn't like that!" cried Dolly. "That's what we were talking about, too. We never have secrets, but we wouldn't dare tell Aunt Anna and mama and papa 'bout this for fear they'd give us the money, and we think we ought to do it ourselves."

"Oh, my gracious!" exclaimed Tony, utterly at sea at this remark. "Why, what's the difference? Let 'em pay it; they're our fathers."

The children took the mail which the postmaster's wife handed them through the little window with the wooden bars; her husband was showing a girl in a lavender muslin some pink artificial roses, while his boy was filling her kerosene can.

Among the letters was one which Dolly insisted on carrying, held close against her breast with both hands. "It's from mama," she said, "for Aunt Anna, and I like to hold it, 'cause I like to hold her tight."

It was rather a solemn party that toiled up the road again through the dust. Ted was weighted with the sense of dishonor and failure, and the consciousness that no one but Dolly and Bess felt it as he did, while Tony and Ethel and Bess could not be merry while Ted and Dolly were so dismal.

It was a great surprise, therefore, after

they had parted from them at their own gate to see the twins scrambling through the hedge in the wildest delight not ten minutes later, screaming something at the tops of their voices which nobody could understand, beyond that it was something in which "mama and papa" figured largely.

Dolly ran to Bess and seized her around the waist, laughing and choking like a crazy child. "What you s'pose that letter says?" she screamed. "What you s'pose?"

"I don't know," gasped Bess, for Dolly held her so tight she could hardly speak.

"There was a fairy—I honestly believe there was," said Dolly. "Ted got his wish right there, and now I've got mine! Mama says it's so dreadfully, fearfully hot in town she's been a little bit sick, and she's coming to Methley to-night, and papa's going to bring her, and stay a week, and then come back for two weeks in August, same's ever. Mama's coming with him to-night, this very night, to-day!" And Dolly let go of Bess to fly at Ethel, and then at Lily, and spin them

both around and around until they were all dizzy.

"We've got to go right back to begin to get ready," said Ted, whose face was crimson and eyes shining, though he kept more quiet over his joy than Dolly did.

"Come on, D.; there's heaps to do. We won't see you again till to-morrow. We're going to comb Trusty and put ribbons on him, and sponge Billy and put ribbons on him, and Pukka Boy and Lady Mew, and we've got to fix up Baby Bunting's house. And put all our bureau drawers in order, and take our baths and get dressed to go to the station——"

"What time are they coming?" interrupted Tony.

"Half past eight train to-night, but we're going to go to meet them; Aunt Anna said so. Come on, Dolly; we've got to work's hard as we can all day." And the twins skipped back to the hedge and wriggled through, and ran so fast over their own lawn that Dolly fell headlong, but was too

excited to know whether she was hurt or not, so jumped up again, and whirled into the house, beside herself with joy.

Such a day as the children spent! Having tipped all the contents of every drawer in both their rooms on the floor—and Teddy's rocks and birds' nests and nails and beetle shells and like treasures made a queer combination with his ties and collars and stockings—having tipped them all out to clean house, for mama to find everything spick and span, they became dismayed at the prospect before them, and decided they must get the animals in order first, because they would be first seen when the carriage drove up. But Billy objected, as strongly as such a gentle creature could, to being sponged, and Pukka Boy would not lie still and be brushed till his Maltese coat shone, though he did need it, for his fur was rough, being July shedding time, but Pukka Boy was not the keeping-still kind of cat at best. And Trusty, with the most exact sense of his style of beauty, scorned ribbons, consider-

ing them fit only for little dogs, so when Ted and Dolly got him done up in crimson bows on his collar and a bow half-way down his splendid tail, he immediately removed the tail decoration with his teeth, and went out and rolled the others into a brown, dusty flatness, varied by streaks of grass stains. And all these preparations were made in such a flurry that in less than two hours after luncheon there was nothing left to be done, and the children were in such a state of mind, between weariness and impatience, that Aunt Anna hardly saw how she or they could get through the five hours before train time.

But every group of hours, as every single hour, must pass at last, as they have since time began, so finally the twins found themselves on the front seat of the carriage, for which post they had begged, to get the first glimpse of the dear travelers, and Bevis was slowly getting under way down the driveway. Ted had implored Aunt Anna to use Roderick Dhu, but she had only laughed at

the idea of taking the young horse, whom they hardly dared trust on the quietest roads, to the station, and Bevis was put into the shafts, as he had been for many summers, to go to fetch the Tarletons.

It was a wonderful experience for children that were never allowed to sit up after eight, to go jogging along under the stars, hearing the whippoorwills, and smelling the damp evening odors! For a while Ted and Dolly bounced about in their seat, fidgeting into different positions, and pelting Fritz with questions. But after a while the loveliness of the night, its peacefulness, stilled even their throbbing little hearts, and they rode along quietly, until the sight of the village and the station set every pulse agog once more.

The train was actually on time—it was often late, and Ted felt sure that on this night of nights it would not be in on time, but there it was, puffing around the bend, and ringing its bell to warn people away from the road that crossed the track just

below the station. Ted and Dolly were on the platform—Aunt Anna could not keep a hand on each of them to save her life—jumping up and down, and almost flying into inch pieces as the train slowed up, and the people began to move through the cars, past the windows, toward the doors. Papa and mama got out of the last car but one, and the twins had taken their stand in the middle of the platform, to command both ends of the train, so they gave a wild whoop, and ran like deer to meet them, getting tangled up with a dog on a leash, and barely escaping collision with the baggage truck on the way. But, somehow, they reached their goal, and felt themselves seized in a loving mixture of soft fabrics and scratchy tweeds, and devoured with kisses, which they breathlessly returned. They felt, as they felt each summer, that though they had seemed to be perfectly happy before papa and mama came, there was really something wanting to their lives which they could measure only when the lack was supplied.

For until these dearest of all the world came, the big corner-stone of creation was, somehow, left out.

Papa held Ted between his knees and squeezed him up tight once in a while as he talked with Fritz, who always seemed to amuse Mr. Tarleton a good deal, and the little boy was content to be silent, and feel the strong arms holding him. Dolly, silent too, was snuggled close to mama, between her and Aunt Anna in the back seat. Mama looked rather pale and frail; she was telling Aunt Anna how sick the heat and the city noises had made her this year.

The children curled up in mama's and papa's laps out on the piazza, in the big rocking chairs, for a short talk and much cuddling, while Aunt Anna was seeing to supper for the travelers. The twins had thought that they would not tell papa about the paper, because they wanted to try to solve the problem of returning the money that had been paid them for subscriptions

without any help, but—they might have known it!—before they had sat on the piazza ten minutes the story of The Sun and Moon had been told, and Ted was not sure that papa was not trying not to laugh as he listened, while Dolly, with her head on mama's breast, certainly heard soft little gurgles in her throat, and they sounded like laughter.

But when papa spoke it was quite seriously. "Well, my son," he said, "I see that you realize that a business man must fill orders if they are paid in advance, and that you will have to make good for these paid-up subscriptions to your paper, unless you mean to continue to publish it, so there is nothing for me to say, except that I rather wonder at your going about Methley to get subscriptions, until you were sure you could bring out the paper. Did Aunt Anna know?"

"No, but not because it was a secret from her papa," said Ted eagerly. "She was busy the morning we went, and we

couldn't 'splain anything, but we were going out 'bout the paper. We never thought 'twas any harm."

"Oh, I understand," said papa. "It was a mistake, that's all. It will help you remember another time to be sure that you can keep a promise before you make it. You began at the wrong end, that's all; first make your paper, then get people to take it. Well, you will have to talk it over with me, and try to find a way to earn the money to pay back—of course, you don't want me to pay your debts?"

"No, sir, we don't," said Ted, so proudly that Mr. Tarleton couldn't help giving him an approving pat. "Dolly and I have taken all our money, and Lily has hers from the paper, so there's five suscriptions. But I think Tony and the rest might help, don't you?"

"I think they must help," said papa, positively. "They took their share of the funds, so they must help pay back. We'll talk of it to-morrow. To think of my find-

ing you, Twinsies, a ruined firm of publishers, with the funds embezzled!"

And Mr. Tarleton set Ted on his feet with what, this time, was a frank laugh, and they all four went in to see what Aunt Anna had good for her guests, for at that moment she called them to supper.

CHAPTER XV

WHAT THE MAIL BROUGHT

TED and Dolly slept late the following morning, though they had meant to get up by daybreak, not to lose one moment of papa's week in Methley. It was eight o'clock when they opened their eyes, however, and even then it was mama's kiss that aroused Dolly—she knew, in her sleep, that it was not Aunt Anna, and jumped to her knees and the delight of having her pretty young mother again.

After breakfast Ted and Dolly took papa over the place, to show him Roderick Dhu first of all—he had heard the story of the Gipsies, and how Ted had saved the day, or rather the night, and Rod with it. Then he had to see Baby Bunting, and his fine resi-

dence, and be told all about Seth who had built it, and had such marvelous powers to win plants, dumb creatures, and children, and how much—how very much—the children loved him. He was shown the opening in the hedge through which the twins crawled, and was told that they liked their new neighbors, but especially Bess, and how Tony was pretty nice, but didn't always see things just as he should. They caught a glimpse of the Rowley group in the distance, but none of them would come over to the hedge when Ted and Dolly beckoned them, for they were all a little afraid of this tall man, who was Ted and Dolly's father, to be sure, but whom they liked better at a safe distance. All this exploring and explaining took so long that when Mr. Tarleton and the twins came toward the house Fritz had been back from the post-office and from doing Aunt Anna's errands in the village for some time, and the doctor's buggy was coming up the road.

As it drew near, the children saw that

the squire sat in it beside Doctor Corbin, and the awe in which they stood of the tall, thin squire kept them from rushing to the gate to meet their friend the doctor, as their first impulse prompted them to do.

The buggy turned in at Aunt Anna's gate and Mr. Tarleton waved his hand boyishly in response to the salute his friends gave him; they were surprised to find him waiting them on the piazza steps.

"When did you get here, Rick?" called Doctor Corbin. "Hallo, twin children! How do you manage to look so cheerful with your father here to keep his eye on you?"

"Very glad to see you, Tarleton," said the squire, getting out of the buggy first. "We count on you only for the latter August dog days." The three men shook hands heartily. "I came for a week, to bring Mrs. Tarleton up; she has been ill from the heat," said Mr. Tarleton. "This is not to interfere with a longer stay at the usual time, when I come to fetch my family."

"Have you heard of your family's recent

achievements in the publishing line?" asked the doctor, with a twinkle, which both the squire and Mr. Tarleton seemed to share.

"Yes; they told me about it last night—some points I did not know," said Mr. Tarleton. "I had received a copy of The Sun and Moon, but I had not heard of the paid subscriptions, nor the great scale on which they expected to continue it."

Ted swallowed hard; it seemed to him that there never could be a better time to tell these subscribers of the paper's failure. He did not fear the doctor; the squire looked more amiable than he had ever thought him before, and papa was there to support him—besides, best of all reasons, if he plunged in now it would be done, and off his mind. So he pushed between his father and the squire, and catching the former's hand behind his back, looked straight up into the squire's keen eyes.

"We're awful sorry," said poor Teddy, somewhat faintly, "but we can't keep that paper up."

"Can't?" repeated the squire, looking down on Ted in his frightening way. "Why not?"

"There's no one but Dolly and me—I—to do it, and it's so hot, and we can't think of things to put in it, 'sides we have to print it all ourselves, with our pencils, and our wrists ache so, you can't think! And the Rowleys and all got tired of it 'most before we started—we just had to stop it!" And Ted almost sobbed, for the squire's grave and steady gaze was not making it easy.

"Well, that was sensible!" said the doctor heartily. "Tarleton, don't let this old legal lemon-drop scare the boy so. It's all right, Teddy, and I would have dropped it before the first number, I've no doubt."

"Yes, but we feel bad about the money," began Dolly, but Ted pushed her aside with a manly desire to take the whole responsibility that did his father's heart good.

"I'm telling this, D.," he said. "You hadn't anything to do with it, 'cept voting to stop, and you had your share of the money

to give 'em back. What we care about," Ted continued, speaking straight to the squire still, because he knew the doctor would excuse anything he did, " what makes us awful sorry and 'shamed is the money. We got fifteen suscribers, and we divvied up the money—'cept a little for the paper and pencils and ink—and most of it's used up. We've got to earn it somehow to pay it back, and we dreadfully 'fraid we can't for a while."

The doctor's hand plunged into his pocket, and the squire cleared his throat as if he were going to speak, but Ted and Dolly fancied some sort of signal passed over their heads from their father to the two callers, for they both hesitated, and Mr. Tarleton said: " Of course, the children will pay back the money that was given them for a paper which they can no longer supply, and, of course, Ted, being a manly boy and an honest one, wouldn't let me pay his debts, but I think we can find a way of helping him and Dolly—and of course the children next door,

who shared the money—earn enough to pay their subscribers what they owe them. They did not mean to do anything wrong, but that doesn't alter the fact that they owe the money."

The doctor took his hand out of his pocket, muttering something the twins did not understand about Spartan parents, and babies of eight. But the squire said heartily:

"You're almost the only sensible young father I ever knew, Tarleton. There is no fear these children won't grow up to honor you. You're all right, Master Theodore; I respect you for wanting to pay your debts, and not being willing to get some one else to give you the money, as if you were a tiny boy, with no character of your own. As far as I am concerned, I will wait for my quarter of a dollar until it is convenient to pay it, and I suppose the doctor will."

Ted squared his shoulders, and looked into the squire's eyes, this time with an entirely new feeling. He liked being treated

in this fashion, and almost felt as though the gruff squire were kinder to him than the big-hearted doctor, who treated him like a baby, to be coddled and indulged.

"Thank you, sir," he said heartily. "We have a little of the money—Dolly didn't use her share, and I've fifty cents I had before, and I guess Lily's going to give hers back, though she hates it, 'cause she wants to use it for charity. We were going to ask you to let us pay the others first, 'cause we want to give it back to Miss Tabitha and three kinder poor women and Seth—and I guess Mr. Allen, 'cause he don't look as if he enjoyed the paper so much and he isn't our minister."

"I see," said the squire, without a smile, though Doctor Corbin gave a great haw-haw as he always did when something struck him as funny. "Now, what do you suppose we came here to tell you? What do you think my morning mail brought me? You'll never guess, but I am much mistaken if you owe Seth his subscription."

"What came?" asked Dolly eagerly, just as Ted said: "Yes, we do owe him; he gave us a quarter for his suscription, though we wanted to make him an honorable one." Ted meant honorary, but the doctor and squire understood.

"I had a letter this morning from Denver, Tarleton," said the squire. "I sent my copy of the children's paper to a brother of mine out there, who, I knew, would appreciate it. The Sun and Moon struck him as a great sheet, and he showed it to some friends of his, he writes, who were spending an evening with him. Among them was a Henry Atterbury, and when he came to the advertisement of Seth and his wares—that's the way to put it, for your twins really were advertising Seth himself, and his powers as a naturalist—when this Atterbury got to this he dropped the paper, and looked tremendously excited. 'I had a brother Seth,' he said, 'and from his earliest days he was just the sort of person this Seth Atterbury, advertised by these chil-

dren, seems to be. I have lost sight of him for many years, and have tried my best to find him, because our mother left property for him which is in my hands.' Then he begged my brother to write me, and ask me to find out from Seth if he were actually the lost brother of this man out there in Denver. My brother says he is a man of property, much respected in the city, who lives handsomely, and is quite the man of wealth and dignity. He gave me certain clues by which Seth could be identified, and asked me to find out if he came from a town in Vermont —Mapletown—and if his mother's name was Mary and his father's James. I fancy there is no doubt that Seth is the lost brother, and if he is, your little paper, and the advertisement you put in for Seth, children, has been the means of finding him his brother, and getting him money enough to live happily ever after, like people in fairy tales."

"Yes, it's the fairy tale," cried Dolly, too excited—though she hardly understood all

the squire had said—to be clear, "it's the fairy story. Seth said the fairy would hear our wishes, and the ones she loved would get 'em. I knew Seth would, 'cause the fairies love him better'n anybody in all the whole world. Oh, dear, dear Seth! Do you s'pose he's got the money, squire?"

Dolly forgot that she feared Squire White, and took his hand in both her burning little palms as if to beg him to make the beautiful news true. The squire smiled down upon her most kindly. "I feel quite sure that it is true, my little Dolly," he said. "You will be the happiest child in all the state, if it is, won't you? Seth's a lucky man to get love, even if he had stayed poor."

"Everybody loves him, 'cause he knows everything about 'em—flowers, birds, cats, and dogs, and all," said Ted, whose brown eyes were wider open even than usual while he had been silently turning over in his mind the story which he had just heard, and bet-

ter understood than Dolly. "Seth told us once he lived in Vermont when he was little; I guess he's the one, all right."

"Well, I've got to see him," said the squire. "No one in Methley has ever been to his house, and I feel sure he doesn't want us grown folk about. Do you children think you could get him for me, and bring him to see me by to-morrow? You may tell him why if you like. I hardly dare visit him; besides, as you said in The Sun and Moon, he is almost always in the woods."

"We'll go," said Ted. "We'll bring him to your house, Squire White. We went to see him before. It's queer, isn't it? We didn't s'pose The Sun and Moon would do such a lot of good. We're pretty glad—eh, Dolly?"

"I'm so glad—" Dolly began enthusiastically, but she stopped short, choking with emotion, and hid her face in her father's coat to cry.

The doctor patted her head. "It's a queer world, Dollydot," he said. "You

never know what you may be doing when you think you're doing something else, or maybe nothing at all."

"I feel rather bewildered," said Mr. Tarleton. "It seems to me I have had to learn a great deal of the exciting things my twins have been up to, and get several new views of the publishing house of Tarleton, Tarleton and Company in the few hours since I came. But I am delighted at the news of The Sun and Moon's shedding light on the pathway of such a man as Seth must be."

"We must move onward, squire, unless you want all my patients to get well for lack of medicines," said the whimsical doctor. "Are you coming with me?"

"Yes; good-by, Mr. Tarleton; come to see me. Good-by, Ted and Dolly, and bring me Seth by to-morrow at the latest," said the squire. And stepping into the doctor's old buggy, as he held the reins up to allow the squire to pass him, Squire White and Doctor Corbin drove away.

"Shall we go over and tell the Rowleys?" asked Ted. "I wonder what they'll think!"

"Let's wait till we tell Seth," said Dolly. "The Rowleys—'cept Bess—are not very nice 'bout the suscription money. I say let 'em wait till we know sure it's our Seth the man lost for a brother. We don't want to play with 'em to-day, now mama and papa're just come. And we've got to go see Seth this afternoon anyhow."

"All right," said Ted. "Let's go get mama and take her and daddy down to the river. Papa, we've found the nicest place, as shady as anything, and we've scooped out a place between the rocks, and kinder dammed the minnies in there, and we play we're Gloucester fishermen—there's a rock we have for our schooner, and we have the most fun! Will you and mama come there?"

"Mama and I will go anywhere you want us to, and do everything you want us to, for we have been twin hungry ever since you

left us," declared papa, patting his little son's head. "And I especially will obey you and Dolly, because I'm to stay but a week, and then go back to be twin hungry for another month."

CHAPTER XVI

ANOTHER WALK WITH SETH

It was still very warm, and mama felt half afraid to let the twins go to see Seth while the sun was high—yet, of course, they could not wander about the wood road alone when it was near its setting. So, being a mama who fully understood how impossible it is to wait when a person is eight and the errand more than delightful, she mercifully resolved to risk the heat of the sun, rather than throw her boy and girl into a fever of impatience, and let them go.

Sun high, or sun low, there was no such thing as walking down the road to Seth's. Ted and Dolly clasped hands and skipped and ran and waltzed along, till Trusty sat down, panting, in the middle of the dust,

and gave three short, sharp barks of protest at being made to hurry so. Seth's cats did not know how perfect were Trusty's manners toward cats, so seeing the little procession afar, they scuttled into the house, and were so startled that they brought Seth out to discover what had disturbed them. He waved his hand—both hands, in fact—to his friends, and boy, girl, and dog flew to him, kissed him lovingly, and then stood looking at him, uncertain what to do or say next—or the boy and girl were, for Trusty, with the advantage of his dogship, was not in the least embarrassed.

"Are you too warm and tired to go with me for a few herbs? It's not far, and I was about to start when you came; a few moments later you would not have caught me," said Seth, noticing with surprise how ill at ease the children seemed with him.

"No, indeed," chimed the twins, and as Seth left them to fetch his hat, they whispered to each other, for the any-numbered time: "How'll we tell him?"

As usual, Seth took a hand of each visitor, and they turned into the woods back of the dear little house which Ted and Dolly found so charming. They were wondering whether, if he proved to be the brother of this man looming up in Denver, and got the money which his mother had left for him, he would no longer live there—if he would not, it almost seemed a pity that fortune had smiled on him.

It was a deeply shaded spot where Seth's herbs grew, and Ted and Dolly threw off their hats to enjoy its damp coolness while Seth grubbed around the roots of the trees, stirring up sweet, pungent, strange odors as he piled the slender herbs, with their thread-like roots, on a clump of moss, ready to carry away.

At last Seth looked up, realizing for the first time that the children were not chattering as usual, but watching him in profoundly thoughtful silence.

"I have all I need," he said, seating himself beside them and hanging his hat on his

knee, and tipping back his head to let the breeze blow over every inch of his face. "There is no haste; I shall not use these herbs to-day, so we will sit here a while, and talk, if you like. Isn't it beautifully cool and peaceful here? Think of all the poor souls there are in the world—and the worst of it is they are not poor in purse, so they can do what they like—who never in all their lives taste one minute of this beauty! Just go scrambling through life—cities in winter and crowded hotels in summer! Aren't you sorry for them?"

"Yes," said Ted, faintly. "But you wished you had money, Seth, that day when we had the picnic."

"I wished I need never think of money again, and of course that does mean having enough to be free of care—yes, I know, but that wouldn't be having much, as other people count money," said Seth, rather to himself than to his friends.

"The fairy *was* there that day, Seth," said Dolly, the poet, and her voice shook

with the excitement of what was to come. "Did you really know she was there, or were you making believe?"

"I hardly felt sure of it," said Seth cautiously. "But you can never tell about fairies. What makes you so certain she was there listening?"

"Teddy got his wish right that minute, don't you remember? And I got mine the next day," said Dolly, "and you know we never once thought mama would come before August! And then, then— You said the ones the fairies loved would get their wishes, didn't you, Seth? The Rowleys and Ethel and Lily haven't got theirs."

"Well, after all, you know three days is a pretty short time for them all to be granted," laughed Seth. "Sometimes the fairies work quickly, sometimes slowly; Ethel and Lily may get theirs, but not before Christmas, and Tony—he asked for a pony, I remember. You see, that is a good deal to ask, and besides, though Tony is a good sort of boy, he isn't just the kind

fairies love best—fairies like less business-like people. Then, you see, I haven't got my wish yet either."

"You're the kind fairies love most to death," said Ted, with conviction. "I guess fairies teach you all you know about animals and flowers, so if you did get your wish, wouldn't you think you ought to? Dolly and I do."

"No, dearies; I should think it was wonderfully like a miracle if the fairies gave me enough money to make me sure of my living all my days," Seth said, with a half sigh and a smile.

"Where's Denver, Seth?" asked Ted, suddenly.

"Far west, in Colorado," said Seth, surprised at the question.

"Do people's brothers go there?" Ted inquired.

"Why, yes, dear boy, and their sisters, too!" Seth laughed aloud at this funny question, and the look on Teddy's face as he asked it.

"Do you think, do you s'pose—is your brother there, Seth?" Ted's voice was husky, and Dolly took a sudden header into Seth's lap.

"Ted!" exclaimed Seth sharply. "What makes you ask such extraordinary questions?" He had straightened himself, and sat erect, his blue eyes dilating and darkening with a keen look the children had never seen his face wear, and his breath came fast.

"It's The Sun and Moon," Dolly explained, rising on her elbows on Seth's knees and gazing eagerly into his face. "Squire White's brother showed it to his friends, and one of them said the Seth Atterbury in the advertisement must be his brother, 'cause he had been lost ever so long, and had always been like that—with the flowers and things, you know. And he said Squire White's brother must write him and find out if our Seth was his brother, and tell him. And the squire sent us to get you to come to see him so he can tell this man out in Denver—shouldn't you think the one in

Denver must be the lost one, 'cause Denver's so far off? I never thought of that before, Teddy."

Seth was trembling in every limb. "You don't know the name of the man in Denver who wanted the squire written, do you, children?" he asked.

"His name was Henry, and Atterbury, like yours," replied Ted. "And he said he wanted to know if our Seth's father's name was James, 'cause it ought to be if he was his brother, and his mother ought to be Mary, and she left money for this lost one, and the Denver man has it, and he wants to find his brother to give it to him—most likely he wants to see him, and loves him too, Seth; don't cry."

For Seth's head had bowed on Dolly's shoulder, and his thin frame was shaking. The twins had never seen a grown man cry, and it frightened them.

"Dear, dear, dearest Seth, please don't," cooed Dolly in his ear. "If you don't want to you needn't come to the squire's, and we

won't tell—the squire can just write and say he's very sorry, but you're in the woods and can't come out."

Seth almost laughed in spite of the tears which were certainly raining down his cheeks now that he raised his head a little and let the children see his face.

"Is he really your brother, Seth?" asked Ted, but he felt sure of the answer before it came.

"Really my brother Harry, my madcap, mischievous Harry," said Seth. "There isn't the least doubt. Dear children, you don't understand. Of course, I will go to see the squire, and of course I shall write my brother at once—and—oh, Twinsies, how do you suppose it feels to have been quite alone for so many years, and then find your brother?"

"It must feel dreadful, yet awfully nice," said Dolly, instantly imagining what it would be to find Ted again if she had lost him for so long. "And the money, Seth? The fairy has given you your wish,

you see. Aren't you glad about the money too?"

Dolly had been worried over Seth's poverty, and it was the greatest joy to her to think it was all over, and now, didn't Seth himself care about it?

"I never once thought of the money, Dolly," said Seth with a start. "Yes, I am glad, or I shall be when I've had time to take it all in. It is the strangest story—do you think there could have been a fairy there that day? You know I was making believe with you, but it looks as though there had been, doesn't it?"

No wonder children loved Seth! And no wonder he needed money, and could never have it, unless it came to him in this way, for there was in him the heart and simplicity of a little child.

"Will you go right back with us now to see the squire?" asked Ted, half feeling as though Seth might vanish up a pine-tree and forget all about new-found brothers, and especially such a stupid thing as mere money.

"Yes," said Seth. "Come home with me to leave the herbs, and we'll walk back together." He arose at once, smiling with misty eyes, but his step was unsteady, and the children saw that he was in a sort of trance.

There was no need of locking up the little house. Seth left his herbs in his cool cellar, and joined the children to go, like a man in a dream, to claim his fortune.

"Is your brother like you, Seth?" asked Dolly, getting possession of his hand.

"Not a bit. It is the brother of whom I told you—my only one—who never understood my love of solitude, as I never understood his noisy, romping games. But we were good friends, afar, and he was a bright, quick, keen-witted fellow, much cleverer than I. He took kindly to business, and always succeeded in what he undertook, while I—I never could make money. He went away from home, and then something happened that made me love the woods and to be alone more than ever, and we lost each

other. I had left my home—I wasn't happy just then, and I couldn't stay there—so I didn't know mother had died till long after, and Henry had settled up matters, and disappeared again. This was some time before I came to Methley." Seth seemed rather to be thinking aloud than talking to the children, but his words were so simple that they understood, except the hints of a sorrow they were too young to understand.

"Will you stay in your house, Seth, now you're going to get a lot of money?" asked Dolly, dreading to be told he would go away.

"Why, Dolly dear, I haven't had much time for planning," said Seth. "But, yes, I shall keep to my old life—you see, it's so much my own life. I couldn't be happy among people; I never could turn my back on the dear, mute friends, the flowers, and beasts, and birds, who have been my life-long companions while I was poor and lonely, and laid their kind little hands—leaves, and wings, and paws—on my heart, and healed it when it was full of pain. I

shall make the little house better, perhaps, but I shall not leave it. Harry and I were always unlike, and his life in the world, and mine in the woods, must have made us more than ever different from each other. No, dears, you will not find me gone next year when June brings you back to Methley."

Both twins drew a long breath of relief. "Then we're all glad—not sorry anywhere—that you've found your brother, and are going to be rich," declared Ted, and Dolly added: "'Cause you know we couldn't stand Methley ever again if you weren't in it."

"You are the best little pair in the world to love queer Seth so much!" said Seth, squeezing the hands he held tight. "But I hardly think I shall be rich," he added. "A few thousands, maybe, but that is riches for me, and indeed it sounds like a fairy tale, and I can't believe it yet."

"And you'll be happy then, like the people in fairy tales, and it will be nice to find your brother, won't it?" cried Dolly.

"Nice! To find the man that used to be

my noisy Harry when we were boys in Vermont, and to be forever free from anxiety how to live! My little boy-and-girl-twins, you can not guess what it means for years to come," cried Seth, and his voice was so full of feeling, and deep with joy, that the children were satisfied.

At the squire's gate they paused. "Mama said we weren't to go in, 'cause the squire'd want to see you alone," said Ted. "We'll go home, and you can tell him 'bout it 'thout us, can't you?" Ted evidently did not feel that in worldly affairs Seth was fitted to take care of himself.

"I think I can answer questions," laughed Seth. "And that's all the squire wants."

"Do you s'pose, if we hadn't had The Sun and Moon, and hadn't put your advertisement in, and the squire hadn't sent it out to his Denver brother, you'd never have been found, Seth, nor got the money?" asked Dolly, in an awestruck voice. She had been putting the question to herself all day since

the doctor had driven the squire to Aunt Anna's to tell the amazing news.

"It is more than likely," said Seth. "I believe, dearies, you have made my fortune."

The twins executed a sort of triumphant war-dance under the squire's overhanging elms. "Only think!" they cried. "And we never dreamed of it! And we'd have done anything, the very hardest things, to have made you happy, Seth, 'cause we love you so, and this was just as easy!"

"Good-by, good fairies, for to-day," said Seth, turning in at the gate. "To the longest day that he lives, happy in the woods among his little woodland friends, your queer Seth will never forget this afternoon, and what his child friends have done for him."

"Good-by, good-by," called back the twins. "Not '*queer* Seth'; it's *dear* Seth, you mean. The dearest, best Seth—that's what you are!"

They skipped off up the road, swinging

hands and singing. As they looked back, just as they got to the bend, they caught a glimpse of the slender, bent form of Seth walking slowly up the squire's driveway to claim his happiness.

CHAPTER XVII

SOLVING THE DIFFICULTIES

"REALLY, Dolly, I think you're not treating your mother very well." Aunt Anna spoke in that merry way of hers which she shared with the pretty mother, and which was so much more charming than anybody else's way of speaking. Dolly knew that she was not in earnest, and yet the remark was so startling that, in spite of the knowledge, she sat up straight and opened her eyes wide.

"Why, Aunty Anna? Why am't I treating her well?" Dolly used to say "am't I" when she was tiny, and still occasionally relapsed into the expressive contraction.

"She has been here two whole days, and has not yet met Dolly's Dames. Don't you

think it is time those ladies called upon her?" hinted Aunt Anna.

"Oh, yes, Dolly, please," mama chimed in. "You wrote me about them, you know, and I felt as though I could not wait to get to Methley to see them, but we've been so stirred by the great results of The Sun and Moon that no one has thought of them. Won't they call on me this afternoon?"

Dolly looked thoughtful. "The children are all coming over for a meeting," she said. "Papa told Ted how he thought we might get back the suscription money, and he's going to have a meeting with Bess and Ethel and Tony and Lily and me to talk about it. I guess we could be Dolly's Dames first, and go to the meeting in our gowns—maybe 'twould be more grown up and solemn that way, anyhow."

"You might ask the girls next door if they will come to call on me," said mama. "In costume, I mean, of course."

"Oh, they'll come if I say so," said Dolly easily, betraying her sense of lead-

ership. But she added, as she slid from her chair: "I'll go tell them, though, 'cause they keep their things over at their house."

Her mother and Aunt Anna watched her creeping through the hedge, and their eyes met, full of love and pride in the little girl. "She's such a dear Dolly!" sighed Mrs. Tarleton. "There never could be a sweeter little woman, nor a better one."

"They are both the best children in the world, Hilda; we discovered that when they were one day old, and time has but confirmed our judgment," laughed Aunt Anna.

Dolly came running back across the lawn. "They'll be over before long, but they've got to dress over there; so, mama, you'll have to go sit in the back somewhere, 'cause you mustn't see them come—you must see us first all together."

"Very well," said mama obediently. "I'll go anywhere you say, and be as blind as a whole nest of bats—do bats have nests,

like the bird part of them, or holes, like the mouse part? I'm sure I don't know how they live."

"Do bats keep flats? Do flats keep bats?" said Ted, who had just come in, in imitation of his beloved Alice. "You can't let 'em make a long call, Dolly, 'cause we've got to get to business."

"They won't want to," said Dolly. "I'll hurry get dressed; Aunty Anna, would you help me, please?"

When Dolly was arrayed in all her finery, she crept out of the side door, and ran down to meet her "dames" at the gate. She had not long to wait them, and when they came, mincing along in the glory of trains and flowers and feathers and flummery, she joined them, and the four ladies came up the lawn, card-cases in hand, to call on Mrs. Tarleton.

Nellie, the maid, admitted them when they rang, and showed them into the parlor. Mrs. Tarleton entered so soon that it was quite evident that she was fully pre-

pared for callers, and Nellie almost at once brought in lemonade and cake.

Most of the conversation was carried on by Mrs. Tarleton, who behaved splendidly, and seemed entirely unconscious of her guests' height when they arose to go. This was the more praiseworthy that she had to bite her lips and hold her hands fast to resist the desire to snatch up the quaint little figures, and kiss and kiss the rosy faces under the more than fashionable headgear.

When they had departed to join the boys who were waiting for them on the lawn, Mrs. Tarleton gathered up her white gown and ran as fast as she could to find her husband. "Rick, Rick, Richard," she called. "Look out the front window as quick as you can and see Dolly and her dames. They are the cunningest things!"

Fortunately, the ladies did not hear this description of their dignified selves. They were listening seriously to Ted, who was announcing to them a business meeting of the gravest character. "Tony and I say to

have it out of doors," he was saying. "And I want to hold it down at the gate, 'cause those posts make such dandy chairs for the heads of the meeting."

"I don't think they are like chairs one bit," said Ethel emphatically. "If you want chairs why don't you sit on the piazza?"

"Yes, and have Nellie dusting behind the blinds, and hearing all we say!" said Ted. "I don't mean chairs like that. Don't you know? At meetings somebody takes the chair, and that means he's running the meeting, and the head of the meeting is called a chair man." Ted pronounced it like two words. "I've heard about these things from my father, and when men come to see him I always pay 'tention to their talk, 'cause when I grow up I mean to be something, I don't know what. Now, come on, and we'll hold the meeting down at the gate."

The twins usually had their way with their comrades, though they never seemed

to try hard to get it. The Rowleys and their cousins meekly fell in line now as Ted led the way, and went down to the big stone posts marking the driveway.

"Dolly and I are in the chairs, 'cause we were editors of the paper, and got it up," announced Ted. "Can you get up there, Dolly, with all those togs on?"

"Not unless you all help me," replied Dolly. "If I pull up the way we always do I'll tear my skirt to bits."

"I'll get up first and pull, while the rest boost you," said Ted, "and then I'll go over on my own post."

This program was successfully carried out; Dolly arrived breathless, but unharmed, on the gate-post, and Ted slid down, and hastily scrambled up its mate.

"Now, gentlemen and ladies," said Ted, but Ethel interrupted him.

"You always must put ladies first," she said. "'Specially when they're so much dressed up."

Ted looked down on the queer group

below him; little Lily, very serious under her drooping hat; Bess, quietly and sincerely interested; Ethel, longing to turn the whole affair into a frolic, all holding their trains gracefully, and behaving with the airs of the world of fine ladyism which their appearance as Dolly's Dames always called forth. Across from him was his twin, behaving with the easy elegance which became a leader of dames, and one of the chairmen of a financial meeting. Tony, resting first on one foot, then on the other, treated the occasion in a humorous way.

"Well, then: Ladies and Gentlemen," Ted began again. "We are having this meeting to decide how we shall pay back the money we owe our suscribers to The Sun and Moon. We've got to do it; we've all got to do it, 'cause we've all had some of the money. The other editor, over on the other post, has given back her part, and I've given my fifty cents, which I didn't get from the paper, but it's all the same, 'cause I used the paper money. I never thought till last

night, when I was talking with my father, and told him 'bout it, and he said so, that by rights we—Ted and Dolly—don't owe anything but ten cents from me, and you others owe it all."

There arose a murmur from Tony and Ethel, and Lily looked frightened, because she really did not fully understand what it was all about, but Bess looked grave, and raised her eyes to Ted with an expression that seemed to assure him of her readiness to do her part toward making the crooked straight.

"Now, you needn't grumble, Tony and Ethel," said Ted severely. "You know you used the money, and you ought to want to pay it back. Bess has given us twenty-five cents, and Lily, you'll give us yours back, 'cause you haven't used it, won't you?"

Lily hung her head. "I'd rather send it to do good," she said faintly.

"It couldn't do any good," said Ted quickly. "Don't you see it isn't yours, and if it isn't how could you 'spect money

that wasn't yours to do good if you used it for something? Most likely it would do an awful lot of harm, to you and everybody that had it."

"You must be just before you are generous," said Bess, in a slow and painstaking way, which came from the fact that she was quoting a sentence she had been obliged to copy from the blackboard at school.

"That's right, that's it, Bess; you're all right!" cried Ted, approving her, and relieved to find one of the little band of neighbors who did not seem to be cloudy in her views of strict honesty.

Lily was conscientious, not to say serious-minded. She caught her breath in a sob, and said: "Well, I'm sure I don't want to steal, if that's what you mean, and you can take your money to all the people it belongs to."

"Good girl!" cried Ted. "Now, that makes us have one dollar and ninety-five cents to pay back, and leaves us one dollar and eighty cents to earn—papa figured it

for me last night, 'cause we felt sure Lily'd give up hers. Now the only ones that owe are me, ten cents; Tony and Ethel the whole sixty they got, each of 'em, and Bess thirty-five, 'cause she gave us a quarter—and then we've got something wrong, but maybe it's the eighteen cents we paid for paper and ink and pencils. Papa says he thinks we might divide them up, after we've paid our debts, 'cept the pencils; those are mine, 'cause I took 'em and the seven cents and fifty cents, 'stead of sixty like you all had, so's to square things. It's a little mixy, but it'll come out when we get to figuring on paper—papa'll help."

"Well, if Dolly don't owe anything, and you only owe ten cents, we've got to do all the work to earn money to pay back, and I don't see the fun," said Tony.

"You can't see the fun of keeping money when it wasn't given you to keep, but to pay for a paper, can you?" asked Dolly suddenly from her post. "And we don't care, Ted and I, not one bit, whether we owe or

don't—we're going to work like everything too to help earn the money, 'cause it's our paper, and we feel so 'shamed, we've got to."

This was not precisely expressed, but Tony grasped Dolly's meaning at once.

"You're awful funny, Dolly, you and Ted both; you make such a fuss! You know the folks would just laugh at what we did, and not mind 'cause we're children, 'sides what's a quarter each? But I'll work and pay it back if you want to, and I guess it's pretty good of you to help when it ain't up to you to do it."

"We stand by our friends," said Ted, with the air of a prime minister.

"Well, what can we do to get the money?" inquired Ethel, who did not look particularly delighted with the prospect.

"Aunt Anna's going to make us mail carrier, and pay us ten cents a week—if it's too hot she says Fritz can go, 'cause we don't really owe money, and she's sorry for us. And she says if you'll help pick potato-bugs, and fruit and things in the gar-

den, and maybe weed with Fritz and us, she'll pay you too, and she thinks your mother will, if you ask her. I kinder think she knows she will, and they've been talking it over," added Ted, astutely. "So, if we try, we can easy have the money before September. Will you, all of you?"

"'Course we will," said Bess promptly, and Ethel and Tony assented with less cordiality.

"Well, I asked papa if there wasn't anything you gave people when you owed 'em, telling 'em 'twas all right, and they'd get their money, or something, and he said yes," said Ted. "He said it was a promising note —wasn't it, Dolly?"

"Something like that; not just that," said Dolly.

"Well anyhow, he 'splained, and I wrote this, and showed it to him, and he said he thought it was fine." And Ted read: "The publishers of The Sun and Moon are sorry it stopped, but it had to. So they promise to pay you your quarter back as soon as they

can. And they give you this solemn written paper, with their names signed, to say so."

"That's all right, Ted," said Tony, admiringly, "but it's a bother we ever did it; don't you wish we hadn't?"

"What, when you think of Seth?" cried Dolly reproachfully. "We're so glad we had that paper we wouldn't mind if we had to work ourselves into skelingtons."

"That's so; I forgot Seth," said Tony.

"Is the meeting over?" asked Lily. "I'm kinder tired standing up on my ankle, and I'd like to have the rest of the meeting where we could sit down."

"Meeting's ajawned," announced Ted, with better understanding of the word he used than of its pronunciation. And he instantly descended from "the chair."

Getting Dolly down was not such a simple matter; long skirts, and fine bonnets that tip over a person's eye, are not adapted to climbing. The united efforts of the meeting rescued her from the post, however, and the Tarleton twins accompanied their neigh-

bors to their own gate, the finery of Dolly's Dames still forbidding the hedge.

"That's settled!" Dolly exclaimed with a long breath of relief as they faced toward home. "We'll have to work, Teddy, but we won't mind, will we?"

"Like it, when it makes us square," said Ted briefly.

They turned in at the gate, and Trusty came as usual to meet them; in the distance Pukka Boy and Billy stretched themselves at the foot of the steps, recognizing the twins, and the chance of a frolic their coming always promised.

"I guess we've settled the paper," said Dolly thoughtfully. "Don't you think with The Sun and Moon helping Seth, and all, this has been the nicest summer we ever had in Methley?"

"I b'lieve it is," assented Ted.

"And don't you think we had better play more by ourselves, down at the river, making believe, and all that, the way we've always done?" continued Dolly. "I like

those children, but we have the best times by ourselves, don't we, Teddy?"

"Yes, siree!" said Ted emphatically.

"Isn't it queer?" remarked Dolly, lifting her long skirt with thoughtful grace.

"Not when you're twins," replied Ted.

(1)

THE END

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